

Spirituality

A Methodical Awakening

by [REDACTED]

Spirituality. An issue I've grappled with most of my life. I've always enjoyed the paradox of eschewing organized religious systems, yet, at the same time, I've always been a seeker of spiritual inspiration. As a bisexual, it's been easy to ignore traditional religious structures-most don't celebrate and embrace a diverse sexuality. However, like a seafaring explorer, I cannot resist the pull of trying out different ideas from time to time. I would probably call myself a "trysexual" regarding most aspects of my life—I'll try anything once.

I was raised Methodist, but somehow I questioned the existence of a Christian god straight from the get-go. (By the way, a good book to read about being Methodist and bisexual is *Swinging on the Garden Gate* by Elizabeth Andrew, 2000, Skinner House. A beautiful memoir detailing one woman's journey to spiritual honesty, through creative means.) I can remember saying to myself during seventh grade communion, "Maybe God does exist. If so, then I'm covered with this communion thing, but really, until God shows up, I'm agnostic." I definitely felt validated when I first learned what agnostic meant -believing something greater may exist -just not sure what. Since then I've seen infinite evidence that many things greater than humans exist. I usually experience this in nature, when I can feel the trees, grass, and animals breathing as one.

At any rate, the Judeo-Christian belief system has never impressed me with its history of massacres, missionary-style colonization, inconsistencies, bloodshed, rape, incest, and pillaging, all in the name of a supposedly benevolent male God. Sure, Jesus Christ has a great rap as a communist and liberal activist, as well as being champion of female equality (by default of his close association with various female figures), and, most early Christians were female (until oppressed by males vying for power), but that was never enough for me to identify with and say "Yippee! I believe! I'm saved!" Saved from what, anyway?

I even took a "Bible as Literature" course in college, hoping that would help me believe that it was at least a beautiful book, full of poetic and inspired writing. Yeah, the "Song of Solomon" is

Methodical continues on page 10



"Aphrodite" By Mayumi Oda

A Divine Eclectic Spirit

By Steph Miserlis

As a kid, I remember being mesmerized by the TV show *Kung Fu*. I loved his quiet all-knowing way. He was so self-contained, like he had found his source. I remember an episode where he faced his own demons in his mind's eye, battling them in a cave. Hmm, actually, maybe that was from a Jan Michael Vincent movie. In any case, I remember wanting to have that sense of self, of peace. I recall trying to find it in my church. I was raised Greek Orthodox and I remember sitting in a pew staring at the picture of Christ tortured on a cross, with people at his feet bleeding and suffering. I felt so scared that I scattered my

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail

Robyn Ochs

Abby

Deb

Dan Taylor

Denise

Rhonda

Deborah G

Steph

Jenny

Jill

Elena

Dan Taylor

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

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Ellyn Ruthstrom

Proofreader:

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to the Spirituality issue. This is our first 16-page issue in a long time and it is jam-packed full of wonderful and varied pieces on the theme. *BiWomen* has focused on spirituality every few years and these issues always seem to have a special quality to them. How we define spirit and how it enters our daily life is extremely personal, yet also very similar in a lot of ways. Which is why it seems so crazy that we are always fighting wars over who gets to interpret "God's word." I would love to hear your reaction to this issue. Please drop me a line on e-mail or by mail and let me know your response to *BiWomen*.

I'd like to point out the challenge that Robyn Ochs, BBWN's treasurer, has set out to all *BiWomen* readers on page 3. She is willing to match up to \$300 for donations to BBWN and I hope that you will consider helping us reach that match. BBWN hasn't done any major fundraising lately and with our funds on the low side we cannot sponsor some of the things that we would like to. Our main sources of income are newsletter subscriptions, any advertising in the newsletter, and button sales (which are minimal). Our button supply is low, but because our funds are also low, we can't purchase new stock. We do not run on membership dues like some other groups, so please give what you can to help keep us a vibrant, ever-changing organization.

We also want to reach as many women as possible with the newsletter and can use your help in this area, too. Do you know of some place where we could place copies of *BiWomen* for free pick-up? Or have you been meaning to subscribe but haven't gotten around to it? In order to keep our bulk mailing status we need to send a certain amount of copies in the mail each issue. Please fill out the coupon on page 15 and begin receiving your copy at home.

And feel free to contribute your writing or art to future issues. This issue shows what a rich community we have to share.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
April/May is:

The Arts

Where are the bisexuals in the arts? Read any good books lately about bis or with interesting bi characters? What about plays or films? Are we invisible or just interpreted as being gay/lesbian? Are you a bisexual artist? Share your art with us.

Deadline: March 13, 2002

FUTURE ISSUES IN 2002

June/July
Married Bisexuals
August/September

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
artwork, photos,
news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

*If you do not want your name
published, please tell us.*

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this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

BBWN Financial Statement: January 1 - December 31, 2001

Balance forward 1/1/01: \$1694.26

Expenses

Printing	2080.69
Postal fees & postage	1048.82
Supplies	299.74
Merchandise purchased	83.25
Event expenses	256.47
Space rental	80.00
Total expenses	\$3848.97

Income

Dues	1630.00
Merchandise	1112.38
Bank Interest	14.90
Donations	322.00
Event income	648.00
Advertising	80.00
Total income:	\$3807.28

Balance as of 12/31/01 \$1652.57

Hey, Bi Women,

Please consider making a donation to BBWN. BBWN's account balance is lower than it should be. To be in good financial shape, we need to raise \$1400.

Remember: if you are reading this, you are part of BBWN. And BBWN is important! In our 19th year of existence, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and *BiWomen* is the second oldest continuous bi publication in the world (after *Bi Nieuws* in the Netherlands). We have no paid staff, and no regular sources of income. We have a longstanding policy of making *BiWomen* available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

I will personally offer to match the first \$300 in donations received. That means that every dollar you donate becomes \$2! Please send your checks to BBWN, Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax-deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140). Be sure to put "for BBWN" in the comment line. ▽

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN, 12/31/01

BBWN Logo Contest

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network needs a logo and is sponsoring a contest to find it. Are you creative? Can you design something that is eye-catching? The logo will be used in *BiWomen*, and other BBWN publications, and maybe even a t-shirt or buttons! And once we have the new logo we can make a new banner to carry in Pride next year! All submissions to the contest must be turned in by April 1, 2002. They can be sent to BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140, or forwarded on e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com. Get out those crayons (only kidding) and start creating!



Some of the BBWN folks who ventured out to Natick for Denise's delicious brunch in November. Check out the calendar on page 15 for brunches in February and March.

GLBT Puerto Rican Special Issue

Blithe House Quarterly, the leading online journal of GLBT literary fiction, is looking for submissions for its 2002 Puerto Rican issue, which will exclusively feature authors of Puerto Rican descent. Now in its sixth year of online publication, *Blithe House Quarterly* features new short stories by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) authors—both emerging and established. The 2002 Puerto Rican issue will be edited by Aldo Alvarez, founder of *Blithe House Quarterly*. For the Puerto Rican issue, the editor is looking for short fiction written in English or in translation from Spanish. For guidelines on submissions, visit www.blithe.com/. Stories must be previously unpublished, fictional (as opposed to memoir), and 2500-7500 words in length. If you have questions after reading the site's submission guidelines, please direct them to Aldo Alvarez at ADAlvarez@aol.com. Deadline for submissions is May 1, 2002.

Manifesting Home During Uranus Opposition:

What spirituality looks like in my life

By Deb

Last spring I felt the winds of change blowing. I didn't know exactly when or where, but I sensed that I would be moving on to a new job and new location. I spent the spring and summer preparing my house for sale, and traveling for both work and pleasure. Each trip I took gave me the opportunity to consider living in a new part of the country. I traveled to Boston for a conference and on to Cape Cod for vacation. I fantasized about what it would be like to live in New England. Work also took me to the West Coast where I stumbled upon a job opening in Cambridge, Massachusetts while day-dreaming and surfing the Web in a workshop I was attending in Santa Clara, California! I sent my application in for the job and then waited.

During the autumn season I felt the need for some guidance and sought out an astrologer friend. I told him about my urge to "move on" and my fear of change. He shared with me that I was in my "Uranus opposition" and that with a moon in Aries, and north node in Leo, I would be embarrassing my Virgo sun more often and finding myself attempting to analyze, plan and rationalize things when, in fact, in a moment I may choose something very different than the results of my meticulous calculations. Being quite logical and systematic in all things, I felt shaken by this information, yet somehow I knew that me not quite being me would be the path out of Nashville and onto something new.

Having the great fortune of both surviving an extended interview process and being offered the job I applied for in Cambridge, I moved onto the more mundane task of picking up my life and moving it 1,100 miles. Among other things, i.e. selling my house, leaving my friends, and quitting my job, I needed to find a place to ground, to center, to nurture myself, to rejuvenate—I needed to find my next place to live.

I came back up to Cambridge nearly two months after my job interview to find an apartment. Prior to doing so, I had thumbed through a book I had purchased several years ago called *The Grandmother of Time*¹. There I found a ritual for finding a new home. It required that I sit and draw the home I de-

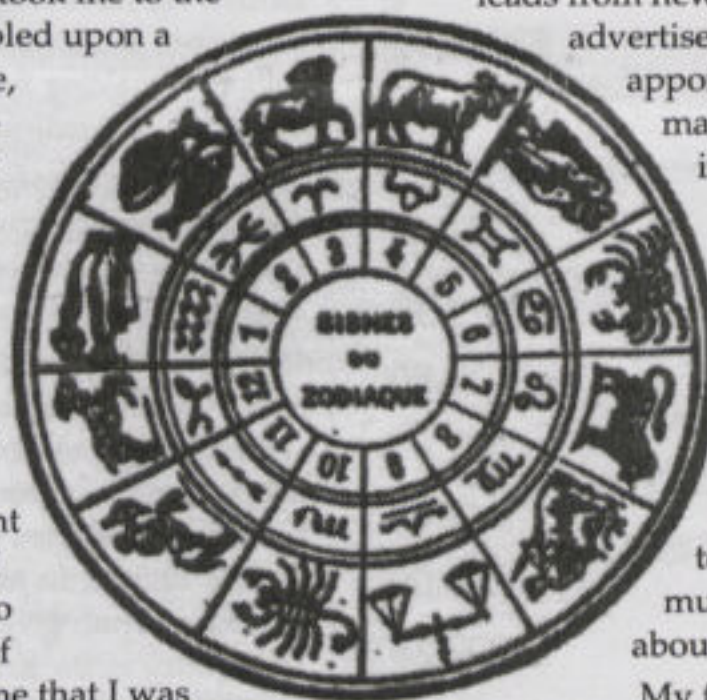
sired—that I spend time with this process, including details. I was then to put the picture on my altar along with objects from the area where I desired to find a home, and for three days light candles after sundown and recite a verse. After the third evening (when the candles had burnt down) I was to throw all organic materials in a body of water, and not look back. This I did.

A couple of weeks later, I came to Cambridge to find an apartment. I had some leads from new coworkers, many advertisements from the paper, and appointments with property managers. During my interview time in Cambridge I had decided that I would look in the Davis Square area or possibly Porter Square. I was sure that Somerville would be my new home. I envisioned riding the "T" along the red line each day to work and had done much research on the Internet about Somerville.

My first evening in Cambridge I looked at a place in Somerville that was too small for me. The next morning I spent time with a property manager who took me to some apartments in Somerville. None quite resonated with me. I spent the afternoon with another property manager who started showing me places in Somerville, but then later in the day asked if I would be interested in West Cambridge. I consented, though I honestly did not think I would be interested in the apartment. It was late in the day and I was ready to take a break from apartment searching anyway.

As soon as we approached the place, I felt myself become surprisingly optimistic. I liked the feel of the neighborhood, and I liked the look of the house. As we entered, I noted many positive features, yet found myself really questioning the location. It was West Cambridge, not Somerville. After walking through the apartment and around the outside, I sat in the car with the property manager and asked her help in drawing a schematic of the apartment. I could feel myself growing weary, and was concerned that I would not remember the layout of the apartment.

Later that evening, I sat restless in my



hotel room. I had several calls in about available apartments in Somerville. I knew the next day could be filled with following up on these ads and taking more tours of apartments. I was certain that I could find a place to my liking in the Davis Square area given a little more time, yet the place in West Cambridge kept flashing into mind. I was so fixated on Somerville, I found this redirection in thought rather disturbing. I paced around my hotel room for a spell, worried that if the West Cambridge place was shown to another person that I might lose my opportunity. I sat at the desk where I had thrown down the scribbled layout of the apartment I had produced with the property manager's help. In an instant, I was struck by the similarity I recognized in the layout I had drawn that day and the drawing that still lay upon my altar in Nashville. This was it. And it was not in Somerville.

This is what manifesting a home during "Uranus opposition" has been like for me, and an example of what "spirituality" looks like in my life. It is about honoring my intuition, using tools for guidance (i.e. astrology) while not giving up my power to discern and choose. It's about working with the powers of nature to manifest what I need, praying every day, releasing my fear and replacing it with love, maintaining an attitude of gratitude, and most importantly, not letting my brain get too much in the way! ▼

¹ Budapest, Zsuzsanna E., *The Grandmother of Time*, Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco, 1979.

Which Comes First?

By Dan Taylor

When people ask you questions about yourself, what comes up first? For most of us it's our job. What next? Which do you come to first, your sexuality or your spirituality?

For me, it's my sexuality. I identify as a bisexual first, pagan second. Actually, it's more like a Dan first, an activist second, a bisexual third, etc. The list goes on and on. Pagan comes in around six or seven, depending on my mood. But it struck me recently that it didn't make sense that I should identify that way. Why was my spirituality such a small part of my life?

It wasn't always. My mother raised me pagan, although we did celebrate Christmas and Easter. We also celebrated Hanukkah and the Chinese New Year. I think one year we celebrated Purim; my mother is a holiday junkie. So, of course, I developed a curiosity

about other religions. I went to Sunday School for a little while. I even played Mary in the Christmas pageant. I went to "Good News" Bible Study for kids for a little while. I went to Wiccan circles, was enchanted by the cantor at my friend's Bar Mitzvah, and attempted to wrap my tiny mind around Buddhist koans, with little success.

Eventually, though, I came back to paganism. I had a little altar in my room in college. I observed the solstices, equinoxes, and mid-season holidays. I searched for a community. I went to a few conferences, and had a wonderful time, hanging out with all the pagan folk, and getting involved in their political drives. I did find a small contingent of queer pagans, and started to get involved.

But as it often happens to people in college, something else caught my fancy. It might have been a woman, a play, or the StairMaster(tm), I really don't remember now. But when I next moved, the altar went into storage, and never came out. As far as I know, it's all still in a box in my mother's barn. It's not that I stopped believing. I just stopped practicing.

Like so many others this fall, I had a crisis of faith. I found that without the rituals, without the physical signs of belief, something was missing. But fitting religion into my lifestyle was harder than I had anticipated. Many people have been hurt by religion, and by those who misinterpret it. Anyone with an active belief in a higher power is suspicious. In the current political climate, anyone who isn't a Protestant is in for serious scrutiny.

But it's something I need and a precious part of my life. So perhaps it is time to go back into my mother's barn and dust off that old box. Perhaps it is time to put my spirituality ahead of my sexuality again. Perhaps it is time to fill the chalice with water and say a silent blessing for all those who dare to pray. Blessed Be. ▼



Queer Health Summit

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) Health Summit 2002 will take place on August 21-26, 2002 in Boulder, Colorado, consisting of a mix of debates, workshops, speeches, panels, and unique activities all focused on current issues surrounding the health and wellness of LGBTI communities. This Summit will include issues ranging from breast cancer and mental health to substance abuse and violence to HIV/AIDS to heart disease. The organizers are looking for creative and interactive workshops and aim to draw a diverse group of LGBTI people and allies and focus not only on health professionals, but also activists, policy-makers, volunteers, academic researchers, and community members. They will draw people from throughout the United States, including rural organizers, and participants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. For more info, visit the Web site at www.healthsummit2002.org. Please forward responses as soon as possible to LGBTISummit2002@aol.com or mail to LGBTI Health Summit 2002 Workshop Proposals, c/o Eric Rofes, 73-B Collingwood St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Final deadline is February 15, 2002.

Visions in Feminism Needs Volunteers

What is Visions in Feminism? VIF is an annual conference whose goal is to bring together people of all ages, genders, races and experiences to explore complex issues facing modern feminism. This year's event, scheduled for May 2002, will focus on both global and local concerns. The organizers are looking for all kinds of volunteers with all levels of commitment. There are lots of ways to help, get in touch and let us know how you would like to get involved! More info is available at www.visionsinfeminism.org or e-mail at visionsinfeminism@hotmail.com.

Finding a Place of Acceptance

By Sunessa

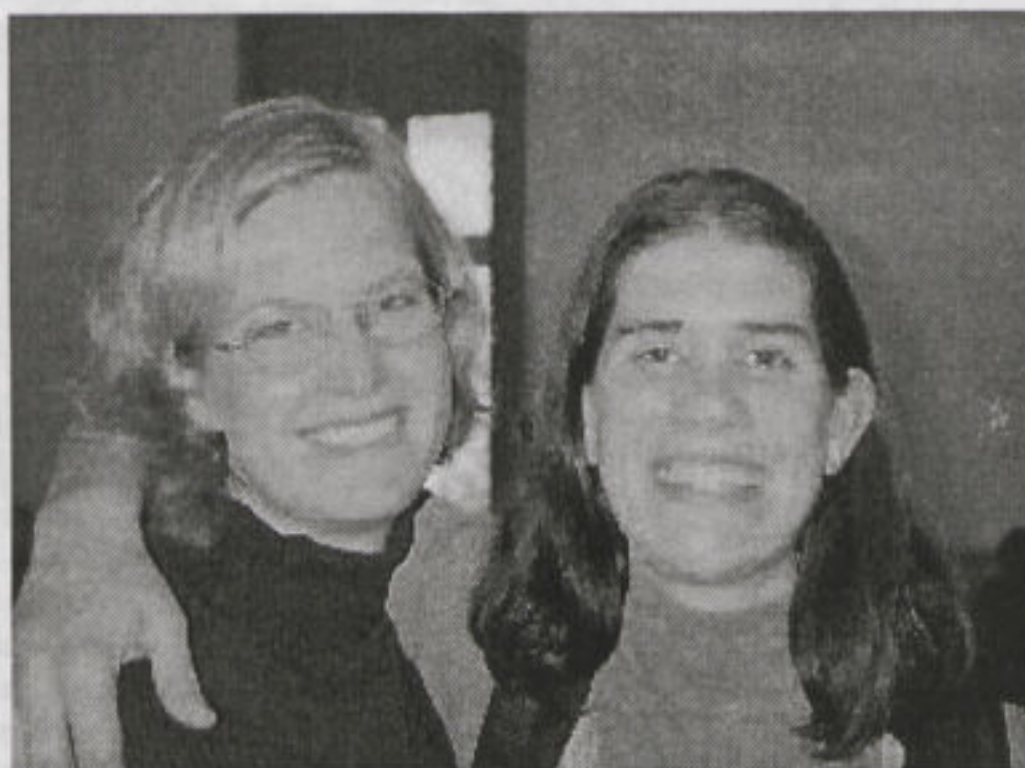
My spiritual roots have always been in Christianity, however, my practice of the faith has changed quite a lot over the years. As a kid and then as a teenager going to church with my family, I was told that being "good" was very important to garner God's good graces. So, I tried to be a good girl by going to church and studying the Bible, especially during the summers at church camp. In general, I found it easy to fit in with people in Tulsa, Oklahoma where I grew up—"the buckle of the Bible belt." By coloring inside the lines and generally just fitting in, I was quickly welcomed and made to feel at home in whatever church I attended. Life as a Christian was easier then, as a kid, and as I changed over the years, it became less so.

Throughout my college years in Colorado I attended many churches as a visitor. Wanting a church home that would accept my evolving, liberal beliefs, I found that it was quite hard to find a place that reflected, or at least supported, my faith. At the first hint of fire-and-brimstone sermons, I'd split. Though I wasn't calling myself bisexual at that time, I cringed at the not-so-subtle reinforcements of traditional family values as I heard vigorous applause following the marriage and birth announcements. What about those who aren't allowed to be married? And those who struggle for simple acceptance of their partners and children?

Similarly, I was easily annoyed by sexist language that insisted on God's masculinity and literal interpretations of the Bible's most demeaning verses. How was I supposed to have so much in common with these rigid people simply because we called ourselves Christians? I felt more shut out than drawn in by most congregations. As a result, my faith became more personal and when I went to church, I felt quiet and closeted for many years.

While I was in the San Francisco Bay Area in the mid-to-late nineties, I began to meet Christians who believed in the "radical" notion that God's love and grace truly was for everyone. My liberal political beliefs and my open bisexuality were truly supported and honored

by a diverse and inclusive family of believers for the first time. Heck, at some churches there were even rainbows on the altars and pink triangles in the center of the crucifix! Marching in Pride Parades with my congregation was only part of the welcoming spirit that they shared with everyone on a daily basis. The sermons were different, too. They were challenges of love, not of punishment, and the life of the church family was all about acceptance of our differences, not conformity to a standard set of values or preferences. I didn't even have to worry about sitting with my girlfriend one week and my boyfriend the next—and yes, that



The author and her former girlfriend at their church's "Coffee Hour."

actually happened several times as the three of us attended the same church! Everyone was truly welcomed and it felt like home. All the joys and sorrows of our human experiences, even our straight and queer sexualities, were actually celebrated as part of God's good gifts to us all. We were all accepted and loved in that plain and simple way that I had wanted God to love me from the start.

Here and now, in 2002, I've looked for and finally found a church in Cambridge that echoes that sense of acceptance and rejoicing in differences. It's a real treat to have that acceptance of everything that I am and that I've experienced in life in a community of faith. Those lines and barriers, expectations and assumptions, simply have no place in my colorful and diverse community of faith today. And now that I've experienced that unconditional love—God's love for us and our love for each other—I'll never be part of a church community without it. ▽

GOOD NIGHT

By Lee A. Hopkins

I'm not sure how it got started or even when. It seems as if it was planted in my mind long before I could think in whole sentences. Though we weren't a religious family by any means, we always blessed each other before entering into our own dreams. The last thing we heard around the household, from room to room like a game of catch were the words "Good night, God bless you, keep you well, I love you." Each and every family member sang its refrain. The hallway between our bedrooms must have just chuckled with our nightly ritual. What was really funny was that we spoke the words so fast, it sounded like one long word, indecipherable to anyone but our own ears. We were accustomed to "goodnightgodblessyou-keepyouwelliloveyou" in a rather high key. The "good night" portion was elongated with the "godblessyoukeepyouwell- iloveyou" quickly following like a train heading out of the station. It was our very own "supercalafragilisticexpialidocious"!

Just recently, my family got together for the first time in eons at my parents. We are all older, some with grown children. We've all changed in huge ways, choosing different faith paths. But when I spoke the infamous nighttime blessing to my siblings, parents and nephews, a strange and wonderful sigh filled the place. My brother's face softened and he picked me up and

twirled me. My sister smiled and said, "I haven't heard that since we were kids!" We were home and with each other. A bit of a miracle for us.

The one thing that has remained a constant in my life has been this evening ritual, even when I escaped the house and was on my own. During college. During grad school and more grad school. During good times and bad. During periods of drought. Even during the changes in family members, the additions and losses, I have whispered the words every night before my eyes are closed and my body is soft with slumber. "Goodnightgodblessyoukeep-youwelliloveyou" trips off the teeth. My nightly ritual has become a living and breathing prayer that now seems to greet everyone I meet. It comes out of nowhere in my mind and quietly blesses those that enter my days and nights. The blessing is as much a part of me as the "Lord's Prayer"...Our father and mother, who art in heaven...

It's quite a comfort...a tradition that has become a part of our family and network of friends. I feel blessed that these words were sung in our home...every night...in the dark...with a giggle or a smile...a reminder of what is truly important.

Good night. God bless you. Keep you well. I love you. ▼

Big Sister Volunteers Needed

The Big Sister Association of Greater Boston seeks women to serve as friends and mentors to girls (between the ages of 7 and 15) in the community. Volunteer information sessions are held weekly in the Boston office, and monthly in the Dorchester, Quincy, and Peabody branch offices. Once accepted into the program, a Big Sister volunteer receives training and ongoing support by a staff social worker. Check our Web site www.bigsister.org/ for the listing of upcoming information sessions, or call 617-236-8060.

Spirituality At Its Best

By Deborah G.

I can safely say that the connection I feel to my birth religion is one of the major reasons I feel just fine about being bisexual. I was taught from a very early age to not only accept differences, but to be thankful for them. We were taught to reach out to people who were oppressed for any reason, to respect and, if possible to help those people as part of our connection with society. We consider the thoughts of anyone who might have a different way of living or looking at things as being food for our soul. Does this sound like religion? If you are Unitarian, it certainly is. The best kind.

Many people say that Unitarian/Universalism is not a religion because they don't TELL you what to believe. I don't see why that is necessary. We study, discuss, and integrate teachings from all the religions, in our quest for "the truth" and what that means to us. We are able to enjoy the company of others who may not feel the same way, and realize we are wiser for it.

We openly state in each worship service

that we accept people regardless of their sexual orientation, and even teach our children to understand that love is what "makes a family." This has helped me greatly when I begin to feel different from the "norm" and what is expected. I still have to be cautious about who I talk to, like anyone, because I know others are not as open minded as I am. I know that not all people in my religious affiliation feel the same way I do, but most of those I have met have similar core values.

Meanwhile, I am making some great friends through the bi women's groups I have attended, and working toward "coming out" to those people I believe have the same values I have learned over my lifetime. ▼



Venus of Lausell, 20,000-18,000 BCE

TEGLY is Hiring

Did you know that Big Tobacco corporations are targeting the queer community? Did you know that queer youth smoke at a rate of nearly 3 times their straight peers? Did you know that 40,000 queer people will die this year from smoking? TEGLY (Tobacco Education for Gay and Lesbian Youth) is hiring LGBTQ youth up to the age of 23 to change the effects of tobacco on the queer community and reveal the truth about Big Tobacco. TEGLY is a paid youth peer leadership program designed especially for queer youth in Boston and the surrounding area. The purpose of the program is to help queer youth avoid the habit of smoking, and to help them take steps toward quitting. Peers work 10-15 hours a week at 271 Huntington Ave. as well as in their communities. For more information, contact Amy Thibault at 617-585-7547 or athibaul@thhome.org.

Impure

By [REDACTED]

Inspired by Tonia Bryan in Pure

I'm sitting here feeling guilty FEELING GUILTY

about wanting him
about dying my hair blonde
about wearing makeup
about those heels, those dresses, those flirty glances
feeling guilty
for my pale-ass white skin
for my privilege of fitting in
for seeing both my femme and my skin reflected on TV
for loving my religion

And I do—I love it

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam for giving me purpose and spirit and passion to be as queer as I want to be, as jew-spiritual as I love, and as womanly and feminine as I choose

THIS IS A MESSAGE FOR YOU

FOR THOSE WHO SAY I AM NOT ONE OF YOU CUZ I LIKE TO FUCK MEN AND BOYS

I AM NOT BETRAYING YOU, SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY, GOING TO LEAVE CUNT FOR COCK, I AM NOT WHO YOU PORTRAY ME TO BE BEHIND MY BACK

I hear them whispering you whispering me whispering why can't I just shut up and go with the flow not have to interrupt everyone with GAY AND LESBIAN GAY AND LESBIAN GAY AND LESBIAN why can't I just say it and know that it must imply me when I know it does not you know it does not we all know it's shit

BISEXUAL FEMME PISSING YOU OFF

I held this forum entitled OPEN FORUM ON BISEXUALITY and we all came—straight, queer, les, bi, pan, trans, gay, unlabeled (is there an intersexed in the house?) and we all spoke and he came out of the closet and she came out as trans and the straight guy asked intimate questions really trying to understand and it was beautiful until the bisexuals acknowledged our own biphobia

Come visit BBWN
online at:

biresource.org/bbwn

*Learn about BBWN, read snippets
of the newsletter, and find links to
many different bi resources.*

feminism/s———I am a child really, just learning what the women's movement really means/meant, how it is changing, how back then maybe I/you/we/them wouldn't be one of them/you/us-who knows? Would I have changed? Pretended I wasn't really me? Would I have blended in?

heh, I have never blended in
I would have been outside the lines even then as I am now

And I think I know what it is going on, I think I know how to use the fancy words, the theory, how to quote Kristeva

and Butler and Rich (name dropping much?) cuz I got a fancy degree from a fancy institution, but I know shit.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

I don't know what it is like to worry about being judged without looking into my eyes (except those days I wear my pins)

But it's not the same, never the same

What do I know?

Why do I assume all the black grrls at the clubs are butches? Why does that turn me on? What are my issues, my problems, my implications of racism?

I have never been in the closet and now that woman of extreme privilege is telling me to get ready to climb on in cuz they don't want someone like me in their school systems teaching their children my feminist celebrating deconstructing values

They say they can have me if I'll just shhhhhhhh

After all I look like them

I AM WHITE

I AM PRETTY

I AM BARBIE WITH AN EXTRA 60 POUNDS

I CAN FIT IN

as long as I strip off the BI PRIDE sticker from my car

and don't forget: HANDGUN CONTROL, I VOTE PRO-CHOICE, BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL WOMAN IS HERSELF, I LOVE XENA, ORGANIZE!, HATE IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE, and PROUD TO BE A FEMINIST

(and the rainbow star of david-yeah jews in the house, and a good old shiny rainbow strip)

CAN NOT LIVE LIKE THAT

OR IN THE BOXES THE LESBIAN FEMINIST GIVES ME EITHER

Box not too fond of boxing me in letting me roll around in my own issues and pain and aloneness and whiteness and patriarchal judaism but ah yes I will take it back, all of it.

I am frustrated and annoyed by all of us by me. I need to let go live my life not be a political statement 24-7. You know they won't date me cuz they think I'm gay. You know they won't date me cuz they think I am straight. You know I want to blow out my head if I can't crawl out of this image I've built up for progressive political processes.

I'm crawling out of my body now unzipping down the front, lifting one leg out of the package and letting real sunshine touch my skin. ▼

AIDS Law Project

The Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) has a hotline to answer AIDS-related legal questions. Have you been treated unfairly at your job, doctor's office, school, in housing or elsewhere because of your HIV status? Have you ever been the victim of violence or harassment related to your HIV status? The hotline is confidential and available in English and Spanish. The hours are 1:30-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. Call 1-800-455-GLAD.



Outfest 2002 Looking for Submissions

Outfest 2002, one of the largest GLBT film festivals, is calling for submissions for completed feature, animated and short films, videos, and documentaries. The festival will be held in Los Angeles, July 11-22, 2002. Applications, rules, and regulations are available at www.outfest.org. The deadline is March 29, 2002 and final decisions will be made by May 31. Also, an Outfest Screenwriting Lab is debuting this year to promote and nurture emerging screenwriters that significantly feature LGBT characters or themes. The Lab will be held July 17-19, 2002.

Methodical *from page 1*

pretty, and that sixties song is also nice, (the one about a time to live and die, etc.), but really, I found the Bible simply to be one of the worst soap operas ever written, with way too much information about incestuous lineages, and way too many reasons why not to eat pork on certain days. But, I loved the fact that my teacher, an old white grizzled male, discussed every passage with women, trumpeting women's influence and strength. It was a daily joy to see him challenge the beloved assumptions of my classmates—mostly bible-beating Baptist males (this was in Texas, after all). That almost made me believe. As well as the cute Catholic priest who spoke at a university event sponsored by the atheist and agnostic student group, and actually stated in public that non-Christians can still go to heaven, even if you never acknowledge Christ as savior - it's all about what's in your soul. Phew, once again I was covered.

But really, just like I can't believe in the heterosexist binary gender system, I have difficulty accepting wholeheartedly any one spiritual tradition. I found a temporary home with the Women's Group at a Denton, TX Unitarian Universalist church. This group of women of diverse ages and orientations calmed and enthralled me. Their fierce and enthusiastic embrace of universal energy and goodness was something to look forward to twice a month. I loved the solstice celebrations and other homespun rituals, even though I'm not much of a goddess-worshipper. I think nature is the only thing I feel comfortable honoring with that kind of intensity that worship signifies.

I even started going to the Sunday services at that Denton UU church, and enjoyed the fact that our part-time minister was probably an agnostic whose favorite sermon was some variation of the theme that science and faith in the unknown cannot exist without each other. I was also lucky that my first introduction to UUism occurred at a congregation-led church. It was a modest church built in the late sixties, with beautiful

folding wooden and black-cushioned chairs in place of pews. These chairs were often arranged in a circle or some other more practical and egalitarian pattern.

The church also possessed a view through a large, paneled window, of a beautiful little garden where one could frequently observe robins, blue jays, squirrels, and the occasional cat, during services. This was Texas, so the garden was always very green. When the minister wasn't there, we got to hear invited speakers talk about what was dear to their heart (most often liberal professors), or we spent the whole hour relaxing to a local jazz or classical band. The church became a "Welcoming Congregation" while I was

there—meaning that the congregation would make an effort to welcome GLBTQ folk. People in the congregation also planned services for each other—often with a sense of the personal, the political, and the ritual.

My experience of UUism was completely turned on its head when I moved to Boston two and half years ago. I went to many UU churches looking for a circle of chairs, a garden right outside the window, a minister on the same level as myself,

literally, and congregation-led services which truly bring in stories from all spiritual traditions, especially eastern ones. What I have mostly found are very old, traditional-looking, beautiful churches, rows of pews, an elevated pulpit for the minister, and peripheral use of the congregation during services. It feels less interactive here, and more rooted in Judeo-Christian teachings. The occasional Zen or Taoist story is just that, occasional. Let's just say the UU churches mention Jesus or some other biblical or Torah allusion a little too often for my sensibilities. UUism is supposed to be about seeking the questions through all spiritual traditions.

What there is more of, up here in New England UUism, is that sense of service to the community within which the church is imbedded. I have been impressed by activism tables during coffee hour, where one can write



Photo by Celina De Leon

letters of protest on the spot and have them mailed off. And, each church (of which there are many, Boston being the birthplace of American UUism) does have its own flavor, to the discriminating palate. First Church, First Parish of Cambridge has a strong young adult following. Arlington Street Church, with its beautiful Tiffany stained glass windows, harbors a large LBGTQ population, as well as a lesbian minister. The Dorchester UU church has an elderly population, and a female minister from India.

My favorite Boston UU-affiliated church of all, the Boston Community Church, is located in Copley Square, near the library. It's up three flights above a restaurant and CVS and it has four theatre row seats for pews. The congregation has scientists and octogenarian communists for members. The minister went to Cuba for a couple weeks of social activism last year. The services are centered around invited guests, speaking on environmental issues, peace activism, "Day of Mourning" (or "unthanksgiving day"), and other issues of race and class. The congregation at each service reflects the topic, so every Sunday results in a slightly different crowd, some more diverse than others. And, for every topic, the people designing the service manage to always find hymns that reflect the guest speaker's talk that day. My favorites are the earth-centered folk songs decrying pollution, which accompany environmentalist speakers.

I now live in Providence, Rhode Island and have settled on Bell Street Chapel (a UU church) to fulfill my needs for spiritual community. It's a fairly diverse congregation in age and sexual orientation, but not in race or SES (socio-economic-status). They take the mission of service to heart and are involved in many social justice projects. The minister just recently chosen by the congregation still brings up the Bible a bit more often than I would like (a sentiment shared by other members, I have found), but also includes other stories, myths, and traditions. My favorite service thus far was the Winter Solstice service in December. Very meditative, full of ritual as the four directions were called then dismissed, and replete with introspection on the meaning of the shortest, darkest day of the year. Not one single mention

of God—just the earth and her universe.

Sometimes I think about going to divinity school so that I can be the kind of minister I long for—a woman knowledgeable in all traditions, but rooted in the practical realities of our age. A woman whose open and out bisexuality benefits her congregation with complete acceptance, caring, and love of all members. A role model for the necessity of persistent questioning coupled with an unwavering, unquestioning belief in the wondrous beauty of the universe. Who knows, maybe that will be my next career, after I pay off my student loans from this one. I know this goal of being the minister I always wanted, though, must have been on my mind a long time, because I went to the Universal Life

Church Web site in 1998 and signed on, becoming a minister in their eyes, with a certificate to prove! It's on my refrigerator, a testament that ministering is a public act, and that it always works best if food is involved.

Generally, though, I've felt much more spiritual out of church than in church. Witnessing the "Homomonument" in Amsterdam affirmed my sense of righteousness. Eating mushrooms in Amsterdam also produced the strongest religious experience I have ever had. I felt like Shiva and that this

earth was but one of a thousand worlds I had created, then destroyed, in my mission to enthrall my beloved partner as we hurled through infinity. It also helped that when I ate shrooms I experienced ESP, timelessness, effortless motion, and the melting of molecular boundaries.

But, most of my spiritual experiences occur in two very natural situations: lovemaking and hiking. During lovemaking, all my windows to the world open, enabling a profound sense of awareness, peace, and openness to the experience. Lovemaking is the one time I've always been able to let my guard down and simply trust and enjoy in the communion. For me, the tangible brings an awakening. My flesh or another's is far more real to me than the body of Christ. The intermingling of bodily fluids is a baptism that leaves an indelible mark, when water simply evaporates. With a tender kiss I feel anointed,

Yes, and I long for one thing more: to learn how to listen to the delicate vibrations of my soul, to be incorruptibly true to myself and fair to others, to find in this way the right measure of my own worth.

Karen Horney

True Spirit Conference

The American Boyz will be holding the sixth annual True Spirit Conference (TSC) at the Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC, February 15-18, 2002. TSC focuses on the social, physical, emotional, spiritual and relational health of all gender variant people on the female-to-male (FtM) spectrum and their significant others, friends, family and allies. The workshops and panel presentations will address topics such as relationships, health and wellness, legal, political and employment issues, spirituality and the specific concerns of special needs populations including youth, elders, people of color and individuals with physical challenges. Town hall meetings will provide large group interactions with a panel of highly trained and experienced facilitators, while two intensive institutes will provide participants with increased opportunity for in-depth discussion and examination of specific issues. This year's conference also features nightly keynote speakers, access to medical screenings and a film festival. Registration forms are available at www.true-spirit.org or call 703-354-3185.

Methodical continues on page 14

Trans-Health Online

The winter issue of *Trans-Health*, the quarterly online magazine of health and fitness for transgendered and transsexual people, is now available at www.trans-health.com. To get on the extremely low-traffic announcement list, send an email to majordomo@trans-health.com with "subscribe updates" (without the quotation marks) in the body of the message. Trans-Health encourages submissions by queer people, genderqueer people, people of color, people of all ages, abilities, and seronegative statuses, people of all cultures, faiths, countries of origin, classes, and ethnicities. E-mail submissions to submissions@trans-health.com. If you are interested in being a local reporter, please let Trans-Health know your geographical location and submit a sample news brief (approximately 20-50 words).

Eclectic from page 1

thoughts to distract myself. I prayed at night, but I couldn't quite find this quiet place—only when I was by the sea. I prayed then, but not to the old man with the white beard, or the suffering Christ, but to "the Mother."

After high school, I discovered the Rowe Conference Center and found myself at some Pagan/Native American workshops. I loved celebrating the "Divine" outside under the moon or with other women. I felt so much more connected. But it wasn't an all encompassing thing. Just a little sense of what it could be.

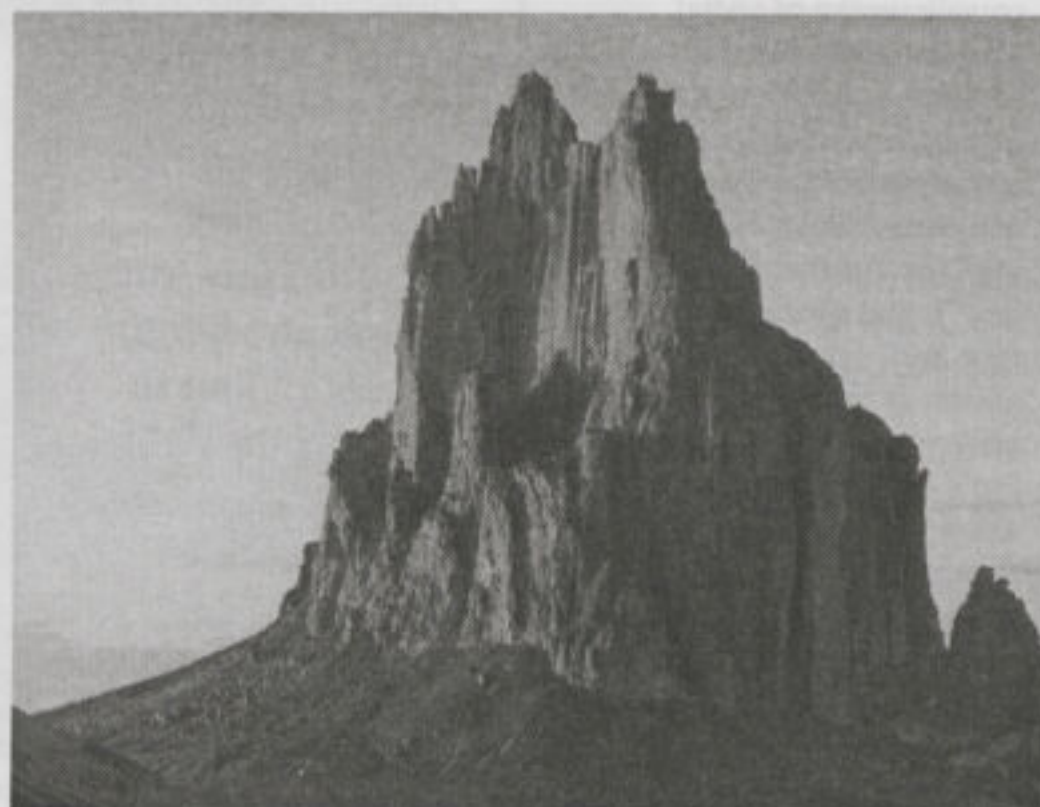
Then in college, I took the cerebral approach. I studied various theologies and went to different services: Judaic, Episcopal, Pagan, Baptist. In my "Phenomenology of Religion" class I studied Martin Buber and Rudolph Otto. Yet, I still couldn't find that *Kung Fu* sense of peace.

Now, I find myself in Santa Fe, New Mexico of all places. Santa Fe is full of people trying to heal, or find their way. I'm one of them. Often times it feels a bit fru-fru. Yesterday, I met a woman at a wood-worker's store who told me how she's discovered Baha'i and we should be wary of the mega-tsunamis about to hit the East Coast. Uh-huh. How we got on this conversation, I do not know. But this is not uncommon in Santa Fe. I met a woman cleaning my neighbor's house who told me her life story and how she has spiritually healed, and then described her side job as an animal psychic. I actually gave her name to my friend who's having problems with her pooch.

I had quite an interesting experience when I recently visited a doctor. I was feeling a general malaise, headachy, dizzy, and just "not right." I finally succumbed and made an appointment with a general practitioner. I walked into her office and told her my symptoms. Then I realized that this was not a typical sterile doctor's office with the white coat, white walls, and white smell. Nope. Smelled like patchouli. And there was a dog in her office and an examining table beside a huge fruit tree. She listened to my plight, and then said something like "I hope I'm not going

too far out on a limb for you, but, you came here to Santa Fe for a reason, and you're not addressing that reason. Yes, you're working on your creative self, but have you even looked at your spiritual self? This blocked effort is manifesting itself for you physically." Ruh? Two parts of me collided. One part was like—only in f***g Santa Fe would a doctor tell me this. I feel like tossing 80% of the time and she tells me to journal and pray to the crystal gods, hellooo?!" The other part was quick and strong as well. I felt, "Yep, she's right. I'm not using my time here. I'm not working on the growth I wanted."

Needless to say, I've started my journal again. I'm taking walks that are quiet and headed nowhere so that I can just listen. I've started burning incense again and sitting there quietly, meditating, singing, drawing. I don't have that *Kung Fu* self-contained feeling yet. In



fact, I may never—even though I've been looking for it my whole life. I now know, though, that this spiritual yearning and effort has been more a part of me than I ever acknowledged. I guess the searching is my own form of spirituality. At moments I find myself at peace. And sometimes, it's not by the sea. Sometimes, it's in my own backyard. I think of my sexuality and its eclectic open way of looking at connection. And I realize, yep, this is who I am: Eclectic. Spiritually, in my work, physically, intellectually, and emotionally eclectic. Perhaps not self-contained, or focused. But my open searching has given me little glimpses which make the search worth it. My spirituality is not an all-encompassing structured practice, but a truthful moment by varied moment kind of thing. ▽

Letter to the Editor

Dear Friends,

Great news! This summer, for the first time, New York City will be having a fully inclusive Pride March. We have succeeded in getting the name of NYC's Pride Events changed to be inclusive of bisexual and transgender people. On Monday, Dec. 10th, Heritage of Pride voted to change their constitution which results in name changes for NYC's four major pride events: the March, Rally, Festival and Dance. Previously named the Gay and Lesbian Pride March, Rally, Festival and Dance; they are now the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride March, Rally, Festival and Dance.

This historic change has been a long time in coming. I have personally been working on it for ten years. Last year I formed a coalition with transgender activists and inclusive-minded community leaders (such as exec. directors of inclusively named organizations and progressive queer politicians) to pressure NYC's Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center to have inclusive language on the new sign for their newly renovated building. This action was not only successful but led The Center to re-evaluate its image and change their name to The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

Center. This change had a profound effect on the consciousness of the NYC queer community. The vote at HOP (the organization that puts on our Pride March, Rally, Festival and Dance) was 25-1 with 2 abstentions. Two years ago we had trouble getting through a t-shirt with an inclusive tag line in tiny letters under the big letters that said lesbian and gay. It wasn't even on all the t-shirts; most of them didn't even have the tag line.

Of course, all the hard work that you all have been doing over the years has contributed to the atmosphere in the queer community that this is an idea whose time has come. It's finally becoming politically correct to be inclusive of bisexuals and transgendered people in our community. The snowball effect is working. What was a tiny snowball with no power 10 years ago has gotten large and is changing the world! There is still a lot of work to do, but it's getting easier.

Congratulations! And please pass the word around.

Love and Peace,
Sheela Lambert

BiHealth

BiHealth is the first and only program of its kind in Massachusetts, and one of the only of its kind in the country. BiHealth provides HIV/STD prevention and education and addresses health concerns in a holistic way, whether one identifies as bisexual, bi-curious, bi-questioning, pansexual, heterosexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, or no label at all. The goals of the BiHealth program are based directly on the voiced needs of community members. Everyone interested, regardless of how they identify, is invited to participate in BiHealth. People can also join the BiHealth educator team and outreach about bisexuality and health issues. BiHealth is a program of Fenway Community Health. For more information, or to join a BiHealth online egroups, call Marshall at 617-927-6032 or email mmiller@fenwayhealth.org.

Cartoon by Dan Taylor




Children From the Shadows

True Colors will be sponsoring for its ninth year "Children From the Shadows (CFS): Creating Possibilities!" on Friday, March 22 at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, Connecticut. CFS is the largest most comprehensive LGBT youth issues conference in the United States with more than 1,700 participants, 180 workshops in a variety of tracks and advanced professional seminars. Registration costs range from \$12-25 for youth and full-time students or \$50-90 for adults. Scholarships and work exchanges are available. For more info, contact True Colors toll-free at 1-888-565-5551 or cfshadows@juno.com.

Methodical *from page 10*

christened, and adored. Physical communion with someone I love is a ritual more precious than all the wafers and loaves of bread in the world. Lovemaking produces true meditation, wherein I no longer make to-do lists, or think about tomorrow's plans. I simply focus on and enjoy the moment, the "here and now."

Hiking is also similar. It's difficult for me to think about tomorrow, or what I need to do when I get home when I am captivated by all I see, smell, hear, and feel (and sometimes taste) around me. A talking brook, a chattering bird, a busy woodpecker, creaking trees, the crunch of leaves under my feet, the smell of pine, vegetation, and newly budded flowers, or fresh snow and the cracking of ice—the spiritual is all in the sensual. My mind may carry the experiences away into ephemera, but it's all grounded in the physical realm.

My spirit is birthed when I open my eyes and hold out my hand. It becomes cosmic when I close my eyes and open my mind. 

ANGER By Abby Stevens

Anger tastes so sweet, like slicing your machete into a roasted pig.
And of course the scent flows even before the meat touches your tongue.
Meat in your mouth, you envelop it, nurture it, swallow it and let it melt into your body.
The feeding frenzy ends when you're able to put down the pig's snout.
You're belly is too full not to speak words that are long overdue.

Sundial By Nomi Siegelman

Don't bury me in your labels.
"Woman or Man?" "Straight or Gay?"
"Femme or Butch?"

I can't breathe.

"You can be bisexual," you say,
like it's a gift.
like you're letting me.

Under your breath I hear the words "for now."

I want to cry.

You look at your watch
And I wonder
How much more time you will give me
To decide.

You glance at the sun, sinking towards the horizon.
Sinking in increments so tiny that you can barely see it move.

"It's getting late," you say.

I sigh.

For what I can't make you see is that,
tomorrow, the sun will rise again,
then set, then rise, then set
In an endless circle
of movement and learning,
of giving and taking.

Profound consistency lies in its altering.

For whether it lies with the sky or with the horizon,
It is always The Sun.

Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!!

- ◆ If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes.
- ◆ I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you.
- ◆ Racism, Sexism, Homophobia - Recognize the Connections.
- ◆ Bisexual Pride
- ◆ VISIBILITY

\$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

CAN YOU MAKE A DONATION TO BBWN?

Check out the matching challenge on page 3 and send in your donation today!

CALENDAR *continued from page 16*

February 22 ♦ Friday

New Words Live presents KVETCH, a queer open mic cabaret, 7:30 p.m. The evening will be hosted by former SisterSpitter Sara Seiberg. 86 Hampshire Street, Cambridge, 617-876-5310. Nearest T is Central Square on the Red Line.

February 24 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Ice Skating at Frog Pond, 1 p.m. Have you been out on the ice yet this year? Now's your chance to lace 'em up and go. Natalie is organizing, so contact her if you are interested in meeting up. NRivkin777@aol.com or 617-327-0772.

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. And now for something completely different. We'll be having brunch at the Boston Fire & Ice. All you can eat. You pick it out, they grill it. Located at 31 St. James Ave. (corner of Berkeley) in Back Bay. Nearest T is Arlington on the Green Line.

March 5 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Communication: Telephone vs. Face-to-Face, Men vs. Women, etc." See February 5th.

March 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 5th.

March 9 ♦ Saturday

"The Floating Dance Floor", a women's dance in Shrewsbury. See February 9th.

March 10 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Video Brunch, noon. Brunch will be held at Natalie's in Roslindale. Bring a dish to share, relax with a great group of women, meet some new people. Call or e-mail Natalie for directions and to let her know you are coming, 617-327-0772 or NRivkin777@aol.com. If you have any suggestions for videos, let Natalie know well in advance so she can try to get them.

March 12 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See February 12th.

March 13 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members are welcome. The meeting is held on the fourth floor of The Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St, Boston.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45, at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See February 12th.

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "The Arts." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

March 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Why mess with success? Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis

Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

BBWN Dancing at Randolph Country Club, 9ish. Feeling like a night out with some great women? Meet up at RCC in Randolph for a night of dancing and general good time. Contact Ellyn if you are interested, 617-623-5535, nellythrustmor@aol.com.

March 19 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Labels and Identity: Are you bi, lesbian, gay, queer, or refuse to label?" See February 5th.

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 5th.

March 20 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7 p.m. See February 20th.

March 26 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office at 29 Stanhope St. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us on the fourth floor of the Living Center. Socialize during and after when we'll drop by Club Cafe for something to soothe you at the end of the day.

March 30 ♦ Saturday

Safe Colleges 2002, a FREE! conference for the LGBT community and its allies, will be held at Tufts University. Tentative keynote addresses by Keith Boykin and Kate Bornstein. Poetry Slam and dance following the conference (8 p.m.- 1 a.m.) Please go to ase.tufts.edu/lgbt/safecolleges2002/ to register and to get ALL the information you'll ever need on the conference.

March 31 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Enjoy delicious vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown on the Orange Line. NOT THE ONE IN BROOKLINE.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Sundays: Bi People of Color Potluck. See the calendar for details.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain.

Saturdays: G Spot at Martin's, 137 Pearl St., downtown Boston. 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.

BiWomen wants you!!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)

___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor

___ Renewal

___ New Subscriber

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays: Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

Every Thursday: Queer Jewish Women Under 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR

February 5 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Fantasy Relationships: What's Your Ideal?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

February 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

February 9 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, 11 a.m. Come on over to Fennel's near Coolidge Corner for a relaxing brunch. Call her for directions and to let her know you will be coming. E-mail her at CoachGold@aol.com.

"The Floating Dance Floor," a women's dance at the Frohsinn Club at 25 N. Quinsigamond Ave. in Shrewsbury, right off of route 9. Contact Jane at jane_elizabethl@hotmail.com, or 508-847-7133 and she'll help organize people who'd like to attend together.

February 10 ♦ Sunday

Eight Minute Dating Extravaganza, 5 p.m., a fundraiser for the Cambridge Women's Center. Have you heard about Speed Dating? Why not try it out, meet some interesting women, and support the fabulous Women's Center at the same time. \$15 cover, RSVP at datingparty@hotmail.com. Call 617-354-8807 for info.

Annual Benefit Poetry Slam & Entertainment Showcase for The Network/La Red, 7 p.m. at the Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St., Cambridge. Hosted by comedy duo Brian + Mal with the Maggie Salzberg Band, Jaclyn Friedman, Renée Farestier, and Toni Amato. \$10-20 (sliding scale) at the door. For more information or advance tickets, call 617-695-0877 or thenetworklaared@erols.com.

February 11 ♦ Monday

New Words Live, Sarah Waters reading from her new book, *Fingersmith*, 7 p.m. Waters is the author of *Tipping the Velvet*, a lesbian/bi novel set in Victorian England that has gotten a very good response. This event will be at Simmons College, 3rd floor conference room of their main building, 300 The Fenway. 617-876-5310 for details. Nearest T is MFA stop on the E train on the Green Line.

February 12 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45, at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. We have no set topic, and all self-identified women are welcome. E-mail rcarson@wso.williams.edu or call 617-629-2632 for details.

February 13 ♦ Wednesday

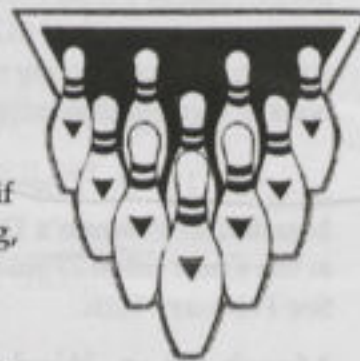
Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6-10 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. This special double meeting is being held at the Wainwright Bank in Central Square. Near T is Central Square on the Red Line.

February 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line. The number of Doyle's is 617-524-2345.

February 17 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Bowling Brunch, noon. Meet at Lanes and Games on Rt 2 in Cambridge. We'll bowl a few strings and then go find a place to have a late lunch. Be ready for some big laughs. Contact Ellyn if you are interested in going, 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.



February 19 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See December 5th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Dating Strategies: Including Personal Ads." See February 5th.

February 20 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7 p.m. Biversity and BiHealth are again teaming up for a social event and to distribute bisexual health information at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square. Join in the fun and the educational opportunity. Diesel is located at 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line.

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CALENDAR continues on page 15

The Arts: *Bi Style*

Telling Stories Outside the Box

By Annie Goglia

I am a storyteller who identifies as a bisexual in the large and thriving Boston storytelling community. Despite the community's liberal bent, it has been surprisingly slow to acknowledge sexual orientation and gender as legitimate subjects for storytelling.

In 1996 I presented a workshop called "Creating Stories Out of Our Experience of Gender and Sexuality" at Sharing the Fire (STF), the New England Storytelling Conference. What I didn't know until later was that my workshop was accepted due to strong advocacy on the part of a lesbian storyteller friend of mine who was on the workshop selection committee. She left the committee, and the workshop was not accepted again. I had been naïve enough to think that the committee would welcome this new and exciting topic on its own merit, but the truth was some people were scared by it and felt it was "inappropriate" in a world they saw as being rightfully dominated by folktales and "wholesome" stories.

I talked to other storytellers about the homophobia I had experienced and general lack of queer visibility in the community. Many storytellers are teachers, librarians, or resident artists who work with children. Often GLBT storytellers have been afraid to come out because they have been afraid of losing work. Those of us who were out were ready for a change, and change came.

For the first time this past summer, a big shift happened. At the National Storytelling Conference there was a gay and lesbian panel and story swap. My storytelling coach of ten years, a straight man, and a lesbian storyteller/academic, both involved in the storytelling community on a national level, were instrumental in making it happen. The panel consisted of two gay men, a lesbian, a bisexual woman and several straight allies. Each of the queer storytellers told riveting stories about their own experiences. The straight male storyteller told of his own unconscious homophobia as a boy and the damage it did to a friendship. The two straight women told knockout stories with gay characters. About 200 people, most of them heterosexual, attended the panel and got their socks knocked off. Us queer people at the conference vacillated

Stories continues on page 10



Photo by Wendy L. Stone

Princess Amie and her adoring subjects.

The Princesses of Porn: Sexual Empowerment for Women

Interview by Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Princesses of Porn have been performing in the Boston area for a couple of years and are very bi positive in their performances, in fact, they took part in the 2nd Annual Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD) in 2000. I recently interviewed Amie Evans, one of the founding Princesses, about the group's philosophy and what makes their queer artistic expression so distinctive.

Q: Give us a quick herstory of the birth of The Princesses of Porn.

A: Formed in the back room of a dog track betting office by Princess Amie and Princess Anna May, The Princesses of Porn were originally a ladies sewing circle and guerrilla terrorist organization. After a few

Princesses continues on page 6

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail
Robyn Ochs

Abby
Deb
Dan Taylor

Melissa
Frances
Annie Goglia
Debbie Block-Schwenk
Jenny
Dan Taylor

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editor:
Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on
recycled paper**

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Editor's Notes

Why are there so many queer people in the arts? While I really don't think this question needs an answer, I do think it is valuable to acknowledge all of the amazing queer—and particularly bi—energy that fuels the arts scene in our lives.

Bi women have a long history of artistic folk to claim. From the classy English intellectuals of Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch (see page 6) to contemporary comedian Margaret Cho and the bi family writing dynasty of Alice and Rebecca Walker.

We know many famous women of the arts have lived bi lives, but many of them either did not have the term for it or—even now—don't choose to label themselves or come out in public about it. Maybe part of this is that many artists—but by no means all—tend not to politicize their identities and don't want these labels to overwhelm their art or how it is interpreted. Others, like Tallulah Bankhead of old and Sandra Bernhard nowadays seem to revel in making biness part of their in-your-face persona.

In this issue we have two interviews with performers of different sorts. Scott Freedman is a young bi singer and pianist who is making a name for himself on college campuses and other venues around the country. The Princesses of Porn are a local troupe of women who thrive on expressing their own sexual desires as well as encouraging women to get in touch with their own.

BBWN member and long-time storyteller, Annie Goglia shares her experiences within the storytelling community and its stretch into a more open acceptance of queer stories. Melissa Kulig writes of the struggle to keep focused on living the life of an artist when the world around does not make it an easy choice to make. And Debbie Block-Schwenk reviews two recent books on another bi icon, Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Our bi artistic energy adds so much to the larger world. Let's hope it will be appreciated even more in the future.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
June/July is:

Married Bisexual Women

Are you married to a man? To a woman? What is it like to identify as bi *and* be married? Are you monogamous or not? How do you maintain your bi identity? What have you learned through the experience of marriage?

Deadline: May 15, 2002

FUTURE ISSUES IN 2002

August/September
Food, Family & Friends

October/November
Bi to Bi Relationships

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
artwork, photos,
news, and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 400639
Cambridge, MA 02140
or via e-mail to
NellyThrustmor@aol.com

***If you do not want your name
published, please tell us.***

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Matching Grant Met by Readers—Thank You!

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

Last issue BBWN's Treasurer Robyn Ochs issued a challenge to our readers and members to donate \$300 and she would match the amount with a donation of her own. I am so pleased to report that our supporters rose to the occasion and we have already exceeded the \$300 mark.

One of the key donors is the New England Leather Alliance, who generously donated \$200 to our fundraising effort. We thank them for the funds as well as for their ongoing commitment to working with the bisexual community on many different levels. And thank you to the fabulous individual donors who will help BBWN stay solid and growing.

What does BBWN do with its funds? Currently, most of our funding goes towards keeping the newsletter going and making sure it gets distributed to activist groups and individuals around the country and around the

world. We like to offer other events occasionally to our membership that requires expending some money but we have held off on sponsoring such events lately because we didn't have the extra reserves. Let's hope our new funds can help us hold more fun gatherings. ▽

Letter to the Editor

Dear Bs,

I am so glad that *BiWomen* lives. I have every single issue from #1 on and it gave my life focus and joy. It helped me begin a l-o-n-g journey I started in 1982 about how and whom to love.

You are valued! We are valued.

Love, Marcia D. ▽

BBWN Annual Pre-Pride Brunch

Think ahead to June and the high holiday of Boston Pride. BBWN traditionally sponsors the annual Pre-Pride Brunch at the Community Church in Copley Square and this year will be no exception. It's a great opportunity to gather together to meet new friends and touch base with longstanding ones. Would you like to be a volunteer at this year's event? If you would like to help set up, prepare or buy food, greet people at the door, or clean up afterwards, please contact Ellyn Ruthstrom at 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.



This year's Board of Directors of the Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) met in January and February for several training retreats to help define their goals for the coming year. If you are interested in volunteering for the BRC or would like to know about how to become a board member, please call 617-424-9595 and leave a message. There are many ways you can get involved with the local bi community. 2002 Board Members: Back row (l to r): Buzz Harris, Alan Hamilton, Ellyn Ruthstrom (President) Front row (l to r): Debbie Block-Schwenk, Deb Smith (Secretary), Sheeri Kritzer (Treasurer).

Boston's Youth Pride!

Saturday, May 18th is the Eighth Annual Gay/Straight Youth Pride March and Day in Boston. Join the Bisexual Resource Center as it marches with all the other queer and allies groups from Copley Square through the streets of Boston to the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade. Or just come out and cheer these very brave youth from the sidelines. Several hundred supporters from across New England gather to hear speeches before they set off and then relax and enjoy the entertainment along the river. These youth are truly inspirational. See the calendar for details.

Scott Freedman: Singing Out and Proud

Interview by Ellyn Ruthstrom

Scott Freedman is an out bi singer/songwriter/pianist with two CDs to his name. He has been performing the last few years at Pride festivals, college campuses, and other small venues around the country. I interviewed him recently about being a bi musical artist.

When did you come out as bi?

I came out as bi when I was 20...I had spent two years "out" of the closet as gay and after a long struggle with both myself and others, I decided I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in another closet. It had torn me up in adolescence to know I was a sexual minority and when I finally "freed" myself, it was such a shame that I didn't know any other option than just identifying as gay since I had same-sex attractions. Sexuality shouldn't be such a black or white issue, it's complex and it needs to start to be treated as such.

As you entertain in the queer community, what has your reception been like when you identify as bi? In straight community?

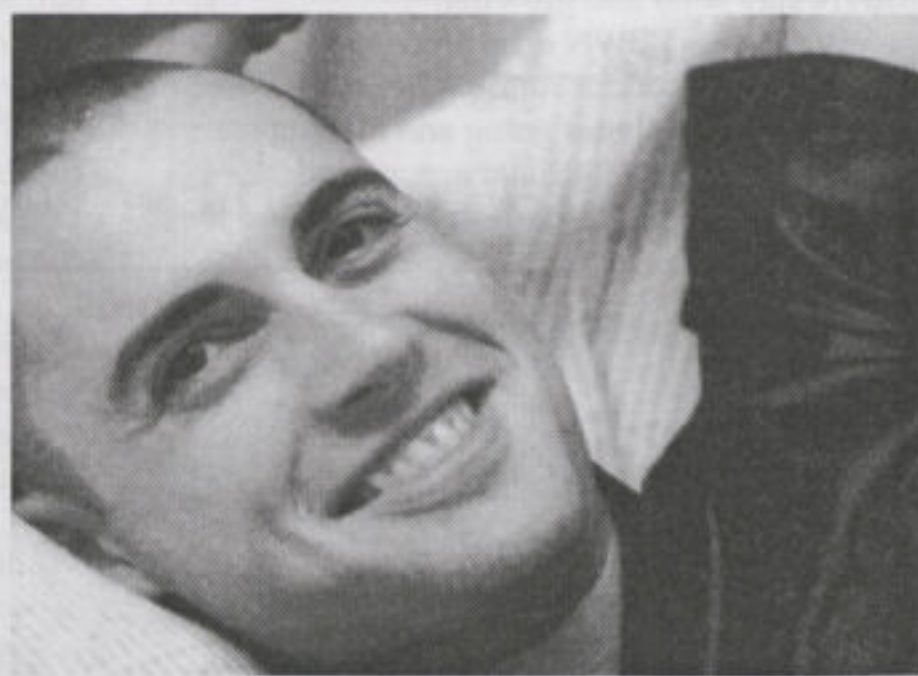
Well, I never make it a point to make sure my audience knows I'm bisexual. I'm sure it comes across through the music and it's always fun to see the little lightbulb in their heads go off when I'm singing about a man in one song and a woman in a few songs later. When I do correct someone's misassumption that I'm not gay but bisexual, I do receive harsher reactions from many gay men. I think they feel threatened I'm not like them and I get the usual "Oh, you're not really bisexual, are you?" And to which I slowly smile and say, "Well, you're not really gay though either, are you?" I give back what I get, that's my policy. Question my sexuality, I'll question yours.

How does being bi affect you as a musical artist?

It doesn't directly affect my music; it's a part of it. It is nice though to have the flexibility of singing a love song and not automatically deciding it's a "he" or "she" kind of song till much later on. I've written many love songs and only in the end stages realized the song was written towards a man or woman.

Has the bi community found you yet? And supported you?

The bi community is slowly but surely finding out about me and it's been absolutely wonderful. I get so much support and have received emails from L.A. to Sydney, Australia. I think it's so important to have activists with a strong voice, I consider it an honor to be educating and advocating for equal treatment of bisexuals within and out of the LGBT community. When I lecture about bisexuality and biphobia at colleges, the biggest reward of all is to have one of the students come up to me afterwards and say, "Thanks for coming, it's amazing that you're speaking about this. I know exactly what you're saying."



Scott Freedman

You seem to have been touring a lot of college campuses, what is that experience like?

It's been incredible...having recently graduated myself (in May 2001), I feel that I strongly relate and connect to the students. They're receptive of my music and what I'm about...the students have been just so supportive of my music from word of mouth to purchasing my music online at www.cdbaby.com or www.amazon.com

When and how did you decide to go into music as a career?

It's been a recent turn actually...I majored in Speech Pathology in college and even up until a year ago, assumed I would just continue that in order to have a "guaranteed" income. Music really began taking off last spring though and I couldn't just abandon it. Music is my passion, it's the air I breathe and I can't imagine being happy doing anything else than it. I decided that despite the trouble and hardships that

may ensue, it's worth it to say I'm doing what I love. I'm not one for compromises!

What's all this buzz about you in Billboard magazine? Has anything come from that yet?

I'm still in shock about it actually...yes, I was featured in a half-page spread the week of February 23rd, 2002. It was a great review and it's given me an incredible amount of exposure to millions of readers worldwide. I've already received calls from two major record labels so we'll see what lies ahead.

Where should we look for you?

Everywhere! I don't simply play in one area...as you can see from my tour dates, I'll be up in the NYC area in April and by the end of the month in northern Oregon! I'll be performing at several pride festivals nationwide this summer too so come out to a show and say hi. I'll be the friendly guy next to the keyboard, smiling and basking in the pride all around me. For more tour dates, bio information, soundbytes, and more, visit www.skotttfreedman.com. ▼

BBWN Events: Think Ahead!

There's plenty to do in Boston in the summer and maybe you'd like to do it with some other BBWN members. Think ahead to June and July and plan an event for a group outing.

Things we've done in past years have included:

- Trips to the beach
- Trips to Provincetown
- Biking or hiking
- Dancing at clubs
- Movie outings

If you are on one of the BBWN listservs or the BiRap email list, post your idea to the group. If not, e-mail Ellyn Ruthstrom at nellythrustmor@aol.com with your idea and proposed date.

An Artist's Voice

By Melissa Kulig

Friends ask me, "How's your art going?" Often I reply that it is going well. Sometimes I shrug and mutter "It's going...". Occasionally it is not going at all. Art has always been there in some form and in some state for my entire life. It calls and prods and refuses to be ignored. It has been, and remains, under the surface, like a smiling child waiting patiently to play, or a dark emotion begging to be expressed. But I know art can be even more powerful. Art saves lives. It saved mine as a depressed and suicidal teen. I remember thinking back then, what a waste it would be to die because I would never experience how far my art would go. I always had a knack for drawing and painting, and wasn't that a gift? I wasn't sure I'd get to make art ever again, so what a shame it would be to throw this gift away. So I reached out for help. Fifteen years later I am at last seeing where my art is going.

A few years ago I had a vision of the mixed media series that I'm currently working on. It was as if someone had pointed to a door slightly ajar, and I immediately burst through it. The series is about the experience of growing up female. Using excerpts from my journal, I have matched my words with the facial expressions of women from my Victorian-era photo collection. My process involves color, pattern, and texture with acrylic paint, collage, and layers of tone with wax and colored pencils. I am attempting to bridge my coming of age at the end of the 20th century with the women at the beginning of it. Hopefully I have shown that the underlying feelings, troubles and dreams of these early twentieth century women may not be dissimilar to my own. Their faces invite us to imagine their inner world, and my wish is for the viewer to connect with their own memories, emotions, and experiences.

These past few months, during some of

the worst stress I've felt in a long time, I quit this series. I needed a temporary break. But, as always, my artist's voice refused to let me rest. After months of restless frustration I have begun exploring charcoal, litho crayon, and ink wash. My studio wall is now covered with abstract, mixed media drawings...and I'm not done yet!

Being a visual artist is a blessing, and perhaps a curse as well. There is the struggle for an affordable studio or live/work space that has reached a crisis in the Boston area. There is the constant search for a job that doesn't drain all of my creative energy. The lack of support from society at large and the lack of state and federal funding contribute to stress. Then there are the stereotypes that artists are flaky, bohemian, irresponsible, a bit "crazy" to live on the edge, or just plain weird. Unlike some, I don't spend my money on clothes, or new cars, or pretty items for my home. I need art supplies, framing services, studio rent, exhibit and competition fees, slides, art classes, art books, and printing and scanning costs. There is never enough time or money.

But back to being blessed as an artist! Even as a child I've always known what I wanted to do. There was never a question about what to major in at college. Every day I appreciate the quality of visually drinking in what I see all around me. I notice the subtleties that others may miss, like the saturated light in the air at dusk, a pattern of shadows, and slices of white or silhouettes at night. Nearly

Artist continues on page 10



"Innocence" by Melissa Kulig

Iris Murdoch



Judy Dench is currently portraying Iris Murdoch, the famed English writer and intellectual in the new film "Iris." While concentrating on her later life and deterioration through Alzheimer's, (which Dench does a stunning job of) the film also has some lovely scenes of the young Iris (portrayed by the fabulous Kate Winslet) that deal with her early years of sexual freedom at Oxford. Her sexuality is represented as being bisexual, but it is not directly discussed. Both actors are up for Oscars for portraying Murdoch.

Princesses from page 1

months of chipping their nails on sub-machine guns and some particularly unpleasant experiences with Patty Hearst-type fashion, the girls decided to put their considerable talents to use for the greater good. In one final act of inspired rebellion, they broke Princess Audrey out of the Center for the Deliriously Drunk and Stupid, using nothing but a nail file, a bottle of AquaNet, and a couple of gravity-defying Wonderbras. *The Princesses of Porn* collected *The Dukes of Dykedom* on the road to fame, primarily because the girls needed someone to carry all their bags; but then, who knew the Dukes had so many other hidden talents? Since that time, they have been delighting audiences around the world with their uplifting speeches and interpretive dance.

Really, *The Princesses of Porn* were formed in 2000 by myself and Maxine Whitty (who has retired), because we wanted to wear flashy showgirl costumes and spread the word of the pussy. Originally, we envisioned three Princesses in the style of 1960s girl groups and we asked Karen "Mal" Malme (of *The Brian and Mal Show*) to be our butch MC and comedian. The Princesses were started as a celebration of femme queer sexuality and as a way to promote our erotic writing. The Princesses were so well received that they began to take on a life outside of PussyWhipped Productions' Queer Girl Smut Extravanzas. As the show matured, we realized we needed more than four performers in order to stage old-school burlesque performance for queer girls. We added Renee Farster (Frankie Cocktail) and then a few months later Cheryl Lieteau (Jack Snatch) and formed *The Dukes of Dykedom* as *The Princesses of Porn*'s official escorts. Maria Kogan (Stevie Robin) is the newest Duke taking Mal's place as she pursues her comedic career. The other two current *Princesses of Porn*, (Anna May Seaver and Audrey McManus) started their rein in January 2002. There are now six of us; three princesses and three dukes.

Q: What is the "philosophy" of the Princesses? And what makes your artistic work important to you?

A: We celebrate "queer female" sexuality in all its forms from flirtations to masturbation, from vanilla to hard core S/M. We also celebrate the many diverse forms the "female" body can be from high-femme to masculine. Our philosophy is simple: All consensual sex is good. Lesbian sex is good. Our goals are ending Lesbian Bed Death Syndrome, establishing world domination through lesbian sex, and discovering a nail polish that doesn't chip.

We celebrate sexual empowerment. We aren't the cookie cutter images of women that

you are normally presented with. We show women that there are many ways to be beautiful and sexy and that it is all right to be beautiful and sexy for other women. We're not just individuals—although we feel strongly about our individuality—we are female archetypes and we've created our Princess characters so each woman can find in *The Princesses of Porn* something of herself and/or something of her lover or just a celebration of that which is female. Likewise, *The Dukes of Dykedom*'s characters celebrate the masculine female and cut across the layers of being masculine and of mixing layers of masculine with layers of feminine in the same person. Our routines strive for a balance showing both femmes and butches in sexually submissive and in sexually aggressive roles; depicting butch/femme attraction as well as femme/femme and butch/butch. We hope that the women who come to a *Princesses* show leave knowing that they have a right to declare themselves sexual beings on their own terms, rather than being forced into a predetermined sexual role by society whether straight or queer. From PussyWhipped Productions' mission statement: "We believe celebrating all forms of lesbian sexual expression is the key to social revolution. If we are wrong, at least we will have fun finding out."

I think mutual objectification can be very feminist and empowering. Doing an on-stage lap dance and turning another woman into a puddle of lust makes the audience, the woman in the chair, and me happy. That's a lot of happy, empowered pussies. Feminism is about empowering and making pussies happy, am I wrong?

Q: What does sexuality have to do with artistic expression?

A: Sexuality has been such a political hot spot for so long in the GLBT community. It was a hot point when I first came out and we were called the GL community and everyone was fighting about adding B for Bisexuals to the name.

For me, sexuality has to do with everything simply because I am a lesbian, or more correctly because I am not heterosexual. I think there has been a strong internal push to move queer people into the mainstream over the last 10 years which is a positive thing in many ways, but part of the backlash of that movement has been a systematic attempt to erase from the public eye the very thing that makes us queer and that is the root of our oppression—our sexual desires.

I am not willing to hide, mask, or disavow my sexual desire for other women, S/M, or gender play in order to get fair protection under the law, the right to marry or corporate spon-

sors for my parade. Likewise, I am not willing to accept second-class citizenship in my Queer community because my desires don't fit the current PR campaign.

My sexual desire is the well-spring of all my artistic endeavors. My sexual identity has formed in complex ways who I am as a whole person. I cannot be separated from that desire on any level. My erotic writing, *The Princesses of Porn with The Dukes of Dykedom*, and *Philogyny: Girls Who Kiss and Tell* celebrate queer girl sexual desire.

Q: I've seen you perform at various venues, including the 2nd Annual Celebrate Bisexuality Day Fall Ball, so I know why I like to watch you, but why would a bi woman be interested in The Princesses of Porn?

A: Have you seen Princess Audrey's breasts? Princess Anna May's ass? Stevie has a collection of dildos to suit any size desire. Jack has arms that look like they were chiseled out of

stone. Frankie is a charmer with freckles in places you'd kill to have the chance to connect. And, of course, there's me.

The Princesses of Porn with The Dukes of Dykedom are about celebrating queer female sexuality. Lesbians, bi women, gay men, straight women all enjoy our shows. We have something to offer every taste from hard-core butch to highest-femme, from the romance of the first kiss to S/M desire. Regardless of your orientation, if you enjoy watching hot sexy femmes or sizzling butches, if you enjoy empowered female sexual expression, girl camp and sexual comedy—you'll love our show!

To be added to the PussyList and receive monthly email updates about upcoming PussyWhipped Productions events; for more information on upcoming gigs; or to hire The Princesses of Porn with The Dukes of Dykedom, send an email to princessesofporn@hotmail.com. ▼

Frida Kahlo



The incredibly talented artist Frida Kahlo is the subject of not one but two upcoming films. Salma Hayek plays the title role in "Frida" which is set to be released very shortly. Her bisexuality is clearly depicted, but again not overtly discussed. In the preview version of the film, there was an amazing scene with Hayek and Ashley Judd (as the photographer Tina Modetti) dancing the tango together. Yum, to die for. See it!

Poetry

Valentine's Day

By Abby Stevens

I am my Valentine.
I take myself to my favorite Indian restaurant.
I buy myself a glass of French Chardonnay.
I drink it on an empty stomach.
The room becomes very wobbly.
The garliccurrychicken is exquisite
Including ME, licking fingers
Red carnations on the tables
Sweet ambrosia
Flashes of fire and light
I love me
Little pot of cherry pie
My eyes feel heavier than my head
Self-love
NOT narcissism, honeys
Know the difference
And the world is truly YOUR
Red carnation on Valentine's Day
I am beautiful
Drunk, stoned, buzzed you call me?
Bite me and I taste like chocolate covered cherries
Red as the blood of an Iron Worker
Teamster take me
Waiter refills my water glass
Know that I come with my own water
Know that I come with my own lover
Know freedom
Chardonnay is the Intellectual's wine
My brain is smiling
"You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" on sitar
Goddess bless your soul John Lennon

As I leave, my waiter hands me a red rose.



Your Faith

By Frances Donovan

Your faith is an orange. You cut it in half,
you squeeze, you drink the juice.
This is what remains when you have drunk.
This is the pulp of your faith in the power of words.

Black letters on grey, the deeper grey
of margins and lines. These colors circumscribe you.
But remember when other colors ruled—
autumn, late summer, the greens, purples, blues
at full maturity. Colors were sweet.
Ideas came fully formed, children already weaned.
You wrote them down. They were beautiful.

Now, you do not trust yourself.
You read this poem as if you are the editor of a magazine.
Look at it: Your mediocrity astounds you.
Once you bloomed words like a tulip tree.
Blank verse sprang like lemons from your fingers.
Once, you wrote the most scintillating things.
Imagine yourself writing these lines on a cocktail napkin,
the smells of beer and summer in the air.

Women's Festivals

Womongathering Spirituality Festival:

June 6-9 on the Pennsylvania/New York border.
Contact: P.O. Box 559,
Franklinville, NJ 08322;
856-694-2037; e-mail
womongathr@aol.com
or visit
www.womongathering.com.

National Women's Music Festival:

June 7-9 in Muncie, IN.
Contact: WIA, Dept
LC, P.O. Box 1427,
Indianapolis, IN 46206;
317-927-9355; e-mail
wia@wiaonline.org or
visit wiaonline.org.

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival:

August 13-18, near Hart,
Michigan. Contact:
WWTMC, P.O. Box 22,
Walnalla, MI 49458;
510-652-5441 or visit
www.michfest.com.

Book Review:

Savage Beauty: The Life of Edna St. Vincent Millay,
by Nancy Milford and *What Lips My Lips Have
Kissed: The Loves and Love Poems of Edna St.
Vincent Millay*, by Daniel Mark Epstein.

Reviewed by Debbie Block-Schwenk

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), known to many of her friends as Vincent, was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, receiving the award in 1923. An unabashedly sexual woman, she held to her belief in free love her entire life, from her relationships with women at Vassar College to her long marriage to businessman Eugen Boissevain. She thrilled audiences around the United States on her book tours, and thousands listened to her readings over nationwide radio in the winter of 1932-33. Even in the midst of the Great Depression, her sonnet sequence *Fatal Interview* sold 33,000 copies in ten weeks in the spring of 1931.

Unfortunately, once the classical forms and sometimes archaic language of her poems were displaced in popularity by the more abstract structures of modern poetry, Millay was relegated to the ranks of minor poets, her work rarely discussed and her life rarely examined.

Thankfully, 2001 brought the publication of not one but two biographies about Millay, spurring a revival of interest in her life and work. To their credit, both mention her bisexuality and open marriage matter-of-factly, though each author frames those issues differently. But neither book fully satisfied my desire to understand what inspired this complex woman and moved her to write poems that I turn to again and again for their vivid descriptions of nature and their sensual and relentless portraits of love and romantic anguish.

Nancy Milford's 500-plus-page volume, *Savage Beauty*, has received more publicity, and is the more comprehensive of the two biographies. Focused somewhat as a "family biography," Milford researched much of the book while Vincent's younger sister, Norma Millay Ellis, was still alive, and the biography contains many anecdotes and opinions from Norma about her sister's life that add to the volume's intimacy and immediacy.

Milford uses personal anecdotes throughout the volume to bring in others' impressions of Millay. One that stuck in my mind was the author's interview with Margot Schulyer. She and Millay had a brief affair in Paris in

1922: "Certainly, she did not look at all as I expected her to look. We took hands. We talked. And later that afternoon we went to bed together." (pg. 230). Schulyer describes Millay's "inner throbbing of excitement that always affected everyone who met her" (pg.230) in a later letter to a friend. She would keep one of the poet's monogrammed handkerchiefs her entire life as a remembrance of their relationship.

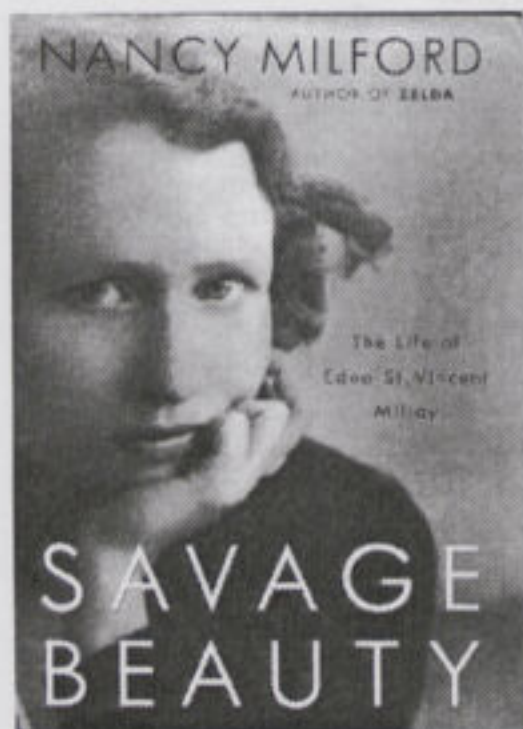
Such stories give us glimpses of Millay's charisma and passion, and hints of her ability to attract both men and women. But these hints never coalesce into a clear picture for me. The poet who railed at her doom to "...be prisoner till my pulses stop/To hateful Love and drag his noisy chain," (*Fatal Interview*, sonnet XVIII) repeatedly inflicted those chains on others. (Several of these ex-lovers were also writers, and left their own accounts of their relationships with Millay, which Milford quotes extensively). However, Milford's chatty prose never fuses these different accounts into one picture that captures Millay's beauty and charm. The photos that accompany the book capture Millay in many moods and states of health; none capture that "inner throbbing of excitement" that Margot Schulyer (and so many others) fell in love with.

Savage Beauty doesn't provide much context for putting Millay's life in perspective with the times she lived in, and this is a serious flaw. Several times Milford's book left me with lingering questions that the other biography by Epstein answered.

When Milford does provide analysis, she brings a lot of insight to it. In her interpretation of Millay's "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver," the impoverished mother who kills herself weaving clothes on a magic harp for her freezing son is symbolic of Millay's mother, Cora. Cora left a negligent and possibly abusive husband to raise three daughters alone, and her iron will was an influence in all of her daughter's lives. More effort spent on interpreting and contextualizing Millay's life would have made Milford's biography a much more important work for those unfamiliar with the poet's work or the times in which she lived.

After reading Milford's sweeping and conversational style, Mark Epstein's book promised more focus (and was a lot shorter). Since I'd discovered Millay through her love poems, especially her sonnets, I had high hopes for a book subtitled "The Loves and Love Poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay." And Epstein's book does provide some needed context and answered some questions Milford's book doesn't address.

However, Epstein didn't do any better than Milford when it came to capturing Millay's



famous allure. While more honestly depicting her promiscuity, Epstein describes her tendency to have many lovers as a "compulsion," which struck me as both unfair and sexist. Whether or not her relationships (and they tended to be relationships, although short-lived) were emotionally healthy for her, Millay turned those experiences into incredible poetry and a vision of sexual and personal freedom that inspired the jazz age generation.

It's not difficult to trace Millay's refusal to believe in lasting love to her family background (both her mother and grandmother had left loveless marriages), though no doubt other factors contributed. Millay's sensual, experience-driven nature would have provided her with a passionate enjoyment in the pleasures of the moment. Whether those factors drove her to sexual addiction — or compulsion, as Epstein more delicately puts it — seems to me to be entirely subjective.

While Millay definitely craved the rush of emotion at the beginning of a relationship, her position as a sexually free woman was (and in many cases still is) a lifestyle that is far easier for others to criticize than if a man were doing the same thing. That Millay dared to "cry holy, holy/upon the name of love however brief," (*Collected Poems*, Sonnet CXXIX) is to me a statement more radical than dysfunctional. Many of Millay's ex-lovers became lifelong friends, and her marriage lasted until Boissevain's death in 1949 — 26 years. Neither of these facts seems to support someone whose sexual life was ruled by compulsion.

When Millay married Dutch businessman Eugen Boissevain, it was with full knowledge on both their parts that liaisons with others would be allowed. They were committed to the principle of free love; Millay not even discriminating on the basis of gender, though her same-sex relationships were few and far between once she left the women-only atmosphere of Vassar College. Nevertheless, they were unprepared for Millay's intense and painful relationship with poet George Dillon, whom she met in 1928 when he was only 22 (she was 36).

Reading the excerpts from their correspondence included in both volumes, I wished more than once the three of them, especially Millay and Boissevain, had access to the kind of polyamory support groups that exist today. Boissevain gallantly left his beloved wife and her lover alone in Paris, giving them some precious time alone while hoping it wouldn't damage their marriage irrevocably. Millay cherished the intensity of feeling that her relationship with Dillon brought her, even when quarrels, schedules, and her continued love of her husband drove them apart for long

periods of time. From the emotional storms of the first phase of their relationship, Millay crafted the sonnet sequence *Fatal Interview*, published to great fanfare in 1931. (The relationship with Dillon would fade, although he remained a friend for the rest of her life).

The sonnets of *Fatal Interview* remain some of my favorite poems, combining romantic language with the very modern awareness of a strong woman brave enough to pursue her desires:

Yet in an hour to come, disdainful dust,
You shall be bowed and brought to bed
with me.
While the blood roars, or when the blood is
rust
About a broken engine, this shall be.
If not today, then later; if not here
On the green grass, with sighing and
delight,
Then under it, all in good time, my dear,
We shall be laid together in the night.

—From sonnet VIII

In Millay's later life, illness overtook her, leading into an addiction to morphine (she also drank heavily). She still wrote, not just her own poems but translations of Baudelaire (a joint project with George Dillon). She willingly sacrificed much of her reputation among her peers to write propaganda poetry urging support for the Allies during WWII, yet another instance in which Millay used any means at her disposal to put forth her beliefs. (Years earlier, she was arrested for protesting Sacco and Vanzetti's execution.)

After several attempts, she conquered her addiction. She lived through the deaths of her parents, her younger sister, Kathleen, and her husband. Finally, at the age of 58, she died, apparently from a fall down the stairs that broke her neck.

Edna St. Vincent Millay lived an amazing life and her courage as a woman, especially as an unashamedly sexual woman, should not be dismissed. She brought that same courage and passion to her poetry, and I'm glad these two biographers have explored her life. While each book is unsatisfying in its own way, together they complement each other nicely.

Yet, while I appreciated the information about Millay's life that I got from both books, they are lacking something. I can only return to Millay's poetry, to her endless quest for love, and to her honesty. Her writing was her life's work, so while biographies can piece facts together, her poetry is the best place, still, to understand what was in her heart. ▽

Women's Festivals

Wiminfest: May 24-26 in Albuquerque, NM. Contact: WIMIN, P.O. Box 80204, Albuquerque, NM 87198; 800-499-5688 or wiminfest@hotmail.com.

Women Outdoors: May 24-27 in Peterborough, NH. Visit www.women-outdoors.org or e-mail info@women-outdoors.org.

Hopland Women's Festival: May 31-June 2 in North Carolina. Contact 707-523-9593 or visit www.hoplandwomensfestival.com.

Safe Home Coordinator

The Network/La Red seeks coordinator for bilingual safe home program for lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender folks and their children fleeing domestic violence. Primary responsibilities will be program development; volunteer recruitment, training, and supervision; overseeing intake process, and providing/coordinating support and advocacy for safe home guests. Rotate emergency back-up. Some evenings/weekends required. Contact The Network/La Red for more details. Qualifications: Must be bilingual (English/Spanish); bicultural preferred. Experience with domestic violence, supervising volunteers a plus. People of color, survivors of battering especially encouraged to apply. Salary: \$28,000-\$32,500 depending on experience, plus full health insurance and generous time off. Resumes to: The Network/La Red, P.O. Box 6011, Boston MA 02114; fax: 617-423-5651; thenetworkla red@erols.com. Deadline for resumes is April 5th.



Storyteller Annie Goglia

Stories from page 1

between "Isn't this fabulous!" and "It's about time!"

I decided to try riding the wav of this newly found legitimacy. I started to develop a workshop called "Telling Stories Outside the Box: Breaking Out of Homophobia." Homophobia has kept both gay and straight people locked into certain gender specified roles: "Big boys don't cry" and "Nice girls don't do that." My idea was to give both straight and queer workshop participants a chance to explore how gender roles and

homophobia has effected their lives.

At the same time I was working "Telling Stories Outside the Box," I was working on another workshop proposal with a storytelling friend, Kevin, a heterosexual man. I asked him for feedback on "Telling Stories..." and he said to me "you shouldn't be doing that by yourself-you should have a straight ally co-lead it with you." I decided he was right and started brainstorming on the spot-which of my straight friends could I ask to do this project with me? Kevin interrupted me: "I don't know much about the topic, but I'm willing to learn-I

would do it with you." Of course I said "yes!" We started to work on it together, submitted our proposal to STF, and it was accepted.

March 23, my friend Kevin and I presented "Telling Stories Outside the Box" at Sharing the Fire and the following Sunday, I co-hosted a topic table on "Modern Issues in GLBT Storytelling" with a gay man. We are definitely breaking out of that box!

Afterword: Kevin and I plan to offer similar workshop open to the public sometime later this spring. If you are interested, please contact me at kalamari@juno.com or at 781-646-2379. ▽

Artist from page 5

everything inspires me! I know that even if I had made art 24 hours a day, every day for the past 36 years, and for the next 50, I would not be able to bring to fruition all of my ideas. Nor could I experiment with the endless methods and mediums that exist today. This knowledge equally saddens and motivates me.

One regret of the last 15 years was giving in to the message that having a full time job, making money and having "financial security" was the most important goal in life. Early on I got the message that art is a nice "hobby," but not a noble profession. Would I be farther along in my art career if I had skipped my full time graphic design career? Probably. My graphic design career was successful but ultimately dissatisfying. It was not what I really wanted to do!

These days, I'm making more art, and am part of a vibrant community art center. In my recent art teaching opportunities this past year, I have discovered a new joy of sharing my love of art with others. Perhaps I have a knack for this as well! I sometimes forget, though, in this fast-paced city, that art takes time. Much of it is a slow, meandering discovery that travels on and on. And in that there is great beauty and immense fulfillment. ▽

Contact Melissa at maksimum@mindspring.com.

Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!!

- ◆ If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes.
- ◆ I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you.
- ◆ Racism, Sexism, Homophobia - Recognize the Connections.
- ◆ Bisexual Pride
- ◆ VISIBILITY

\$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:

BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

relationship or not, what do you consider romantic?" See April 2nd.

May 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 3rd.

May 8 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See April 10th.

May 12 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain, Noon. Please bring the usual potluck dish and drinks to share. It's also Lilac Sunday and those interested can head over to the Arnold Arboretum after the brunch for a stroll together. Contact Robyn at ochs@fas.harvard.edu or 617-413-2717.



May 14 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See April 9th.

May 15 ♦ Wednesday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Bisexual Married Women." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

May 21 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "When do you tell someone you're bi? The first time you meet them, or over the phone, or only if it comes up?" See April 2nd.

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 3rd.

May 18 ♦ Saturday

Boston Youth Pride March and Festival, 1 p.m. Meet near the fountain at Copley Square around noon to show your support for GLBT youth and to march with the bi contingent. Volunteers are needed to carry the banner and staff the table. Call Wayne at 508-699-6612 or bryant@tdint.com.

Biversity Picnic Brunch. Will coincide with the Youth Pride events. Meet at the fountain outside the church at Copley Square. Copley Square on the Green Line is closest.

May 22 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7 p.m. Biversity and BiHealth are again teaming up for a social event and to distribute bisexual health information at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square. Come join in the fun and the educational opportunity. Diesel is located at 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line. See April 24th.

May 25 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Bicycle Ride, 10 a.m. The first bike ride of the season! We'll do the Minuteman trail, starting from Alewife T stop (expected length — 20+ miles, 3+ hours). Meet in the drop-off/pick-up area of the Alewife T station on the Red Line. Everyone is welcome, regardless of experience. Call Sheeri at 617-629-9516 or email awfief@cs.brandeis.edu to RSVP or if you have questions. You don't have to RSVP, but if you do, we will wait to start the ride until you show up.

May 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. For this brunch we'll go back to a place we haven't been in a while the Lindwood Grill, at 69 Kilmarnock Street in Boston's Fenway area (very close to Thornton's). Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

Bisexual People of Color Potluck, 4-6 p.m. Its another "Jazz and Juice at Johns in JP." John has the Jazz music. You bring the juice, or whatever other food and drink you want to share for an afternoon of fun and socializing. Use of oven/stove will be available for food to be warmed up. All diverse ethnicities, gender identities, and allies are welcome. For information and directions contact John at 617-983-8788 or email vines@eudoramail.com.

May 27 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office at 29 Stanhope St. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after.

Swing and Latin Dance Classes and Workshops: 5-week classes in Swing and Latin for Beginners start Mon. April 8 in West Roxbury; Sat. workshops in Salsa Level 2 begin April 27 in Roslindale. Info: 617-363-0029 or www.OUTtoDance.com

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Sundays: Bi People of Color Potluck. See the calendar for details.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain.

Saturdays: G Spot at Martin's, 137 Pearl St., downtown Boston. 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.

BiWomen wants you!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- ___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- ___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- ___ Renewal
- ___ New Subscriber

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd

Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

Every Thursday:

Queer Jewish Women Under 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR

April 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Money, Sex, and Gender: how does money influence your relationships?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

April 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

April 9 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

April 10 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

April 12 ♦ Friday

Reading of Best Transgender Erotica, 7 p.m. Editors Raven Kaldera and Hanne Blank will be joined by other local contributors. At New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire Street, Cambridge. Call 617-876-5310

Come visit BBWN
online at:

biresource.org/bbwn

*Learn about BBWN, read snippets
of the newsletter, and find links to
many different bi resources.*

for more information.

April 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 3rd.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "First Female Love." See April 2nd.

April 20 ♦ Saturday

Bayard Rustin Breakfast, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Annual breakfast for GLBT people of color and their friends, held at the JFK Library. Keith Boykin is the keynote speaker and Zili Roots will provide the entertainment. No charge.

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

Celebrate Spring Walk in the Arboretum, 1 p.m. Spring has sprung and love (or something that passes for it) is in the air. Celebrants will leave from Doyle's immediately following brunch.

April 24 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7 p.m. Biversity and BiHealth are again teaming up for a social event and to distribute bisexual health information at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square. Come join in the fun and the educational opportunity. Diesel is located at 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line.

April 27 ♦ Saturday

The Dinner Party 2002. Benefiting the Women's Care Fund at Fenway Community Health, an evening with dinner, dancing, and entertainment at the Westin Hotel, Copley Place. Comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer will be the night's main attraction. Tickets are \$125. For info call 617-267-8862 or mbarber@fenwayhealth.org.

BBWN Dinner Party, 7 p.m. For those of us who can't make the big ticket night out, let's meet up for a fun evening of food, frolicking, and film. Contact Ellyn if you are interested. Closer to the time a place will be selected and we'll decide which film to see. Call Ellyn at 617-623-5535 or e-mail nellythrustmor@aol.com.

April 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. People who attended the last Pho Pasteur brunch asked if we could do it again, so why not? Join us for the best Vietnamese food in the area at the Pho Pasteur at The Garage in Harvard Square. Entrances on the JFK St. or Dunster St. side. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

May 7 ♦ Tuesday


Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Spring Fever: Romance. Whether you are in a

Red
The Network

para Lesbianas y Mujeres Bisexuales Maltratadas
for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women

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Grupo de Apoyo
Refugio de Emergencia

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Todos los servicios son gratis y confidenciales.  All services are free and confidential.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Married Bisexual Women

Random Thoughts On Marriage

(in no particular order)

By Deborah Block-Schwenk

Like most privileges, the privilege of being (happily) married means one doesn't have to think about marriage much. The everyday acceptance of one's status becomes blurred and in the background, especially when one lives as I do in a part of society where unmarried couples (same and opposite sex), are freely discussed and accepted.

.....

I think about being married when I go to the dentist. Kevin and I have the same dentist, we schedule back-to-back appointments which we sometimes flip-flop without notifying the office. Or one of us leaves the other with the bill for both. Would the receptionists be so accepting if we weren't married? If we were a same-sex couple?

.....

Both the hard-core Christian traditionalists and the anti-marriage feminists envision marriage as something rigid and imprisoning. I beg to differ—the reason marriage, in some form or another, has survived so many years in so many countries is that it is one of the most flexible of human institutions (much like that other source of right-wing ire, “the family”). What marriage means, and is, changes constantly, and will continue to change. This is the way it should be.

Domestic partnerships and other legal recognitions of non-marriage relationships are useful, but the ultimate goal as I see it is to redefine marriage in an even more flexible way. I see marriage as any committed relationship of, as the legal papers say, mutual support. Marriage existed long before there was the legal concept of next-of-kin, or most of the myriad of tax laws and benefits that are now attributed to “marriage.” They can all be discarded or modified without injuring the core of what committing to someone else means.

I don't get the right-wing bogey of polygamy.

Random continues on page 6



May 31, 1997, Vivienne and Terry's wedding day. And the bisexual and the lesbian lived happily every after.

A Bi/Lesbian Marriage: Love at First Sight

By Vivienne Esrig

The last time the topic of marriage came up in *BiWomen* was May of 1997. I was just about to get married to the love of my life; a woman I met through a personal sex ad. We had agreed to meet for coffee for 45 minutes and would then entertain the idea of dinner. It was love at first sight, thank god for the both of us. A fairy tale romance ensued that had us engaged within two weeks and married 16 months later. I had not predicted I would end up with a woman, but it doesn't matter. As I stated in a much later *Boston Globe* article on Celebrate Bisexuality Day, “Being bisexual doesn't mean you get to pick the body the love of your life comes in.”

Five years ago, I wrote about how my wife accepted my bisexuality and how proud I was to have found a lesbian that didn't run in the opposite direction upon hearing her date is attracted to men. Let's fast forward to a few years later (to steal a line from Alanis Morissette)... I have been through five amazingly wonderful, complicated years. Certainly the best of my life in a multitude of ways. I was especially thrilled when, a year after our wedding, Terry agreed to accompany me to the bisexuality

Marriage continues on page 7

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail

Robyn Ochs

Vivienne Esrig

Deb Morley

Dan Taylor

Denise Pruitt

Frances

Sheeri Kritzer

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Elena

Linda Blair

Sarah

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published
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Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Editor's Notes

I'm not the marrying kind, and yet I've been married. Many moons ago I fell in love with a man from another country. After five years of me working illegally and going back and forth to the U.S. to make enough money to survive, we got married. So, technically, I've been a Married Bisexual Woman. But I didn't truly explore my bisexuality and claim it as my sexual and political identity til after my marriage was over. There was definitely love involved in our relationship, but I never would have married him if he had been American. I also know that if he had been a she we never would have been able to marry at all.

I also knew when we got married that it wasn't forever (and I didn't promise forever in our civil ceremony), which many people are often shocked to hear. Their shock always shocks me. But maybe it's the concept that anyone can possibly promise another person "forever" that truly shocks me.

When you start hanging out in the bi women's community you realize that quite a few of our sisters are living in the married state, the legal kind. Just as Denise Pruitt mentions in her piece on page 4, married bi women are our mothers, daughters, neighbors, and ourselves. Yet, we know that in the larger queer women's community married bi women are looked askance at for various reasons. Some think the women are just experimenting sexually, or not brave enough to come out and leave the heterosexual privilege behind, or that they will play with their emotions and then go back to hubby.

What you'll often find to be true is that married bi women are being extremely honest with themselves and with their partners in trying to explore their desires, their emotions, and what can bring meaning and fulfillment to their lives. There are several different stories in this issue alone that attest to the various outcomes that can occur from that exploration. Sometimes marriages strengthen, sometimes they end, and sometimes marriages between women occur instead. That's biversity for you.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
August/September is:

Food, Family & Friends

What do these three "F" words mean to you? How is your experience of them affected by being bi? Share your favorite recipe, your favorite way to celebrate with others, the secret to long friendships and enduring family ties OR what makes those very difficult.

Deadline: July 17, 2002

FUTURE ISSUES IN 2002

October/November

Bi to Bi Relationships

December/January 2003

Fantasies

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
artwork, photos,
news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

***If you do not want your name
published, please tell us.***

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Visitors From Out of Town

In April, BBWN co-founder Robyn Ochs (far left) hosted a brunch at her home to introduce the new Executive Director of BiNet, Vineita Porter, (near left) to Boston bi activists.

Also at Robyn's brunch was longtime bi activist and writer, Lani Ka'ahumanu, who was in town doing personal history interviews of local bi activists for her bi history book project. From left to right: Lani Ka'ahumanu, BBWN co-founder Marcia Diehl, and former *BiWomen* editors Debbie Block-Schwenk and Linda Blair.



Photos by Ellyn Ruthstrom

BBWN Hosts Annual Pre-Pride Brunch

Celebrating Pride in the Boston bi community begins with the annual BBWN sponsored Bi Pride Brunch. As always, it will be held at the Community Church on Copley Square (565 Boylston Street) on the morning of Saturday, June 8th, 9-11:30 a.m. The Bi Brunch is a great place to see old friends, make new ones, have some good food, and get psyched for the march. We ask for a \$5-10 sliding scale donation to cover the costs and hopefully make a little for the BBWN treasury. Nearest T stop is Copley on the Green Line. Fabulous bi T-shirts, Bi Resource Guides, buttons, and jewelry will be available, along with good food to get you ready to march. Then join the bi contingent and march off at noon for the Boston Common!

The brunch is a great opportunity to gather together to meet new friends and touch base with longstanding ones. Would you like to be a volunteer at this year's event? If you would like to help set up, prepare or buy food, greet people at the door, or clean up afterwards, please contact Ellyn Ruthstrom at 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.

New York City Extends Civil Rights Ordinance to Transgenders

On April 30, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed a bill to extend civil rights protection to transgender and gender-variant people. Organizations such as the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA), and other trans and LGBT organizations fought for three years to get the bill enacted.

Paisley Currah, associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College and a founding member of NYAGRA, said, "With this law, the City Council is sending a very clear signal to employers, to landlords, and to owners of public accommodations that this kind of discriminatory behavior is now illegal. And as the largest jurisdiction by population in the U.S. to ban discrimination against transgender people, it might have a positive

spillover effect elsewhere because it suggests to legislators in other cities that transgender inclusion will eventually become the norm in human rights laws."

Noted trans activist and Stonewall Rebellion veteran, Sylvia Rivera, was remembered for the work she did to help pass this legislation before her death in February. State Senator Tom Duane said, "In my heart, I will always see this as Sylvia's bill."

The states of Minnesota and Rhode Island and almost 40 municipalities now have civil rights laws on the books to protect transgender people. ▽

From the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition.

Mothering Conference and Publication

The Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) seeks submissions for its upcoming conferences and next journal issue. ARM is committed to maternal scholarship from a feminist, multicultural perspective. Mothering, Religion and Spirituality Conference, (October 24-26, 2003, York University, Toronto) deadline: September 15, 2002. Mothering and Work Conference, (May 3, 2003, York University, Toronto) deadline: Nov. 1, 2002. Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering on "Mothering, Popular Culture and the Arts," (spring/summer 2003) deadline: Nov. 1, 2002. For information, please contact: ARM, 726 Atkinson, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3J 1P3; Phone: 416-736-2100 x.60366; E-mail: arm@yorku.ca; Web site: www.yorku.ca/crm

To Myself Be True

Over the last seven years, I have discovered that I am not in the minority. I am representative of daughters, mothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, friends, and neighbors everywhere. I am a Bisexual Married Woman. I am married to a man but have attractions to women.

For twenty-five years, I have been married to a man but constantly thought and fantasized about women. During the first twenty years of my marriage I worked as a medical professional, lived in the suburbs, and raised five children. To my physician husband, I was the typical suburban wife and mother. To my children, I was the cool mom who attended all their school and sports events. To my parents, I was the sweet perfect daughter and family woman. To my coworkers and friends, I was the epitome of professional suburban women. To myself, I was untrue.

I appeared to be heterosexual to anyone who does not understand bisexuality. I did all

By Denise Pruitt

the things that I felt I was born to do (except to be sexual with a woman). I started looking for support and validation for my feelings. I found both in a group for Bisexual Married Women that meets at the Cambridge Women's Center (see page). This support group was composed of women like myself who were married to men and having similar attractions to women. I grew to understand my feelings and became more comfortable with myself to act upon my desires.

After dating many women over a period of five or so years, I met the love of my life. The path that I have *now* chosen is very different from what some Married Bisexual Women would choose. I have made the decision to divorce the man I have been married to and build a life with a woman (which includes a commitment ceremony this fall). I have had mostly positive support from family or friends in my decision to be with a woman. I am finally being true to myself. ▼

Bisexual Marriage

I am unmarried. Until last year, I was also un-partnered. I define marriage differently than the government's view of one man and one woman signing a contract that, in all likelihood, they never read. For me, marriage is a completely spiritual thing. When I choose to marry someone, it will be because I feel that I can join my life with theirs for a very long time—on the order of decades. For me, joining my life means living together, or very near each other, and raising children together. Not because any of those are required for a marriage, but I know I would want children, and I would want a spouse of mine to care for and help raise those children.

By Sheeri Kritzer

Would I ever get married? That's a tough question. I would definitely get "married"—that is, join my life with someone else, if I found someone or someones to do that with. People are a very integral part of my being, both in sexual relationships as well as all sorts of friendships.

There are, of course, snags. I probably will want some element of religion in my married life—though not any more than I do in my single life—which would mean celebrating traditions for some holidays and ceremonies. And with sharing a life comes sharing those traditions. And when I plan a wedding, or plan to have a child, or plan celebrating a holiday, it's not just the opinion of my spouse(s) or partner(s) I have to consider; I have to consider the opinions of my relatives.

Sharing your life with someone can be very complicated. Much like bisexuality, marriage is a very complicated issue. Being married, unmarried or unpartnered is an identity with benefits, drawbacks, social stigma and stereotypes. This concept is just starting to be explored by people fighting for equality in marriage as well as the Alternatives to Marriage Project (www.unmarried.org).

In the end, the concept of marriage is, as bisexuality, different for each person. ▼

La Red para Lesbianas y Mujeres Bisexuales Maltratadas
The Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women

617.423.7233 (V/TTY)

Linea de Crisis
Grupo de Apoyo
Refugio de Emergencia

617.423.SAFE (V/TTY)

Hotline
Support Group
Emergency Shelter

Todos los servicios son gratis y confidenciales.



All services are free and confidential.

Unmarried Under Attack: An Update on the Super-DOMA Amendment in Massachusetts

By Linda Blair

Thinking you'll be able to legally marry your same-sex sweetie before you know it? After all, you do live in the bastion of progressivism that constitutes Massachusetts, right? Wrong. At least not if the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family and their Massachusetts affiliate, the Massachusetts Citizens for Marriage, have anything to say about it. Our arch-enemies are at it once again, folks. This time, right in our own backyard.

By now you probably have heard about the so-called "Super-DOMA" ("Defense of Marriage Act") constitutional amendment that our foes are trying to get on the ballot for November 2004. In addition to permanently outlawing same-sex marriages and civil unions in Massachusetts, this ballot measure would prevent the state and all Massachusetts cities and towns from granting domestic partnership benefits like health insurance, medical leave, and hospital visitation rights to both same-sex and different sex unmarried couples and their children.

This March and April saw newspapers like *The Boston Globe*, *The Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, and the *Springfield Union News* chock full of stories on how the proponents had intentionally tricked people into signing their petition to get this measure on the ballot by telling them they were signing a petition to save horses from slaughter. The fraud took place on such a massive scale that the story even attracted coverage on Channel 7 News

and in *The New York Times*.

Despite the signature scandal, the radical right has succeeded in moving their initiative before the state legislature, the final step before it could be placed on the ballot. On April 10, the Joint Committee on Public Service held hearings on H4840, the "Super-DOMA" bill. Committee members listened to cops and parents, legislators and even the Massachusetts Attorney General, voicing their opposition to this mean-spirited, anti-gay proposal. With questions about the signature scandal buzzing like flies, the proponents mostly stayed away. Only about a half dozen of the masses of supporters they claim to have stepped forward to testify in favor of H4840.

Now you might be thinking that with all the scandal surrounding the initiative and with the many voices of reason that have stepped forward to oppose this measure that it's bound to be defeated. After all, this is Massachusetts, right? Well, think again.

Because this would be a Constitutional Amendment, the Christian Coalition et. al. need only get 25% of a joint session of the state legislature to vote in favor of the bill to move the initiative forward.

It is a monumental task to try to get 75% of the state legislature to vote against this. States all across the country, and in fact the federal government itself, have passed so-called

Essays on Women of Color and Writing

Twenty years ago, with groundbreaking texts like *This Bridge Called My Back*, women of color interjected their experiences, their bodies, and their writing into the public arena. They understood quite well that writing was a tool for survival as well as a tool of dominance. What place does writing have in the lives of women of color today? What are the politics of writing for women of color today? How have these politics changed for "Third Wave" feminists? The editors are looking for papers (4000-6000 words) by women of color writers who critically explore the political, social, and personal uses of writing for an anthology. Both imaginative and theoretical writers are encouraged to submit papers to create cross-genre dialogues between women of color writers. All genres of writing are welcome as long as they are both critical and accessible. Complete

papers are due July 26, 2002. Please send contributions and/or questions to: Luna Calderon, 1548 Parker St., Berkeley, CA 94703 or to: WOC_Writers@hotmail.com.

Update continues on page 7



We had a great turnout for Lucy's brunch at the beginning of the year. June's brunch is the Pre-Pride Brunch at the Communnity Church in Boston, July's is at Deb's (see the calendar for both) and stay tuned for the end of summer BBQ in August.

First LGBTI Health Summit

The National LGBTI Health Summit 2002 will take place August 21-25 in Boulder, Colorado. The summit is being organized by a ten-person collective under the umbrella of the Boulder County AIDS Project and has been awarded major funding from the Gill Foundation and Bristol Meyers Squibb. Health activists, public health workers, medical professionals, HIV prevention leaders, and community-based service providers are expected to convene in response to a range of challenges currently facing LGBTI health advocates nationwide. The summit is expected to draw activists and professionals from all over. For more information about registration and community housing, contact Mark Beyer at 303-444-6121 or mark@bcap.org or visit the web site at www.healthsummit2002.org. The host hotel for the summit is the Millennium Hotel which can be reached at 303-443-3850 or www.millennium-hotels.com. Limited scholarships and community housing are available. Information on this and a number of other topics is also available at the web site.

Random from page 1

They use that against bisexuals especially—"they'll want to marry a man and woman and then we'll have polygamy!" And, of course, that's not going to be true for the majority of people. But either way, where does this horror of multiple marriages come from?

Feminists and human rights activists have a right to be concerned because most systems of polygamy mistreat women horribly. But why does the Christian right get so uptight about this? I'm Jewish and the Old Testament is full of men with more than one wife. Jews don't do that anymore, except for a few who lived in the Muslim states until recently, but it was something done a long time ago, and by some people we're supposed to look up to as forefathers of the religion. So while it may not be acceptable anymore, I don't think it's regarded with the sort of horror I hear from these fundamentalist Christians. I'd love to understand this.

Whenever I hear the right wing proclaim that "marriage is between one man and one woman" and always has been and always will be, I want to denounce them first not for their homophobia, but for their xenophobia and complete dismissal of the non-Christian (and even some nominal parts of the Christian) world. I'd bet that throughout most of history—and definitely in many cultures even today—marriage is between "one man and one or more women." Now this may not be the best arrangement for the women, but it is the culture in many places, and we have to understand it before we can reform it. But to pretend that these people don't exist, that their marriages are also somehow "lesser" because they don't conform to one particular group's standards, shows how out of touch these people are with the true complexity of the world.

I cringe when marriage is described as being about children. No one asked me about my plans or ability to have children when I was getting married. I've been legally married for almost eight years, and have no plans to have children. I wait, tongue planted only half-way in cheek, for the warning notice: You must breed or your marriage will be annulled.

But then, can we start a class-action suit on behalf of the children of this country who are endlessly used as political pawns instead of being provided with what everyone knows they need: love, stability, attention, medical care, healthy food, pure water, clean air, a decent education. That will do them much more

good than whether their parents are married or not, straight or not.

I probably have a view of marriage that's not very mainstream (surprise, surprise). But this is the advice I give anyone who asks: ignore what you're "supposed to do" in a marriage (or any relationship, for that matter), and just do what works for you.

Marriage doesn't have to be monogamous to work.

I'm the primary bread-winner. He takes care of the house and works part-time. It's a decent system. I resent the responsibility sometimes, but the fact is that I have the more marketable skills and I'm better at working full-time. He's a better cook and pretty good at doing the laundry.

A recent book claimed that career women put off marrying and having children until their middle to late thirties, then they discover that husbands are difficult to come by and it's often physically difficult to have children at that age. And some of them regret this.

Lots of people have weighed in on this book, and the author's assertion that women who want to have children should marry young and make that a priority. And I think if you want to have children, then having children should be a priority in your life.

But, as has been pointed out, these women didn't make having a child a priority in their lives. And there's a reason for that, even if they claimed, in college or even in a later period of time, to want children.

Part of the reason, some others have pointed out, is that so many successful women still feel the need for their husbands to be more successful than they are. And such men are rare, or are already taken, or maybe are intimidated by these women.

The irony of all this, to me, is that these women who have broken out of one mold so successfully, are still trapped by others—they still feel like they need a husband in order to have a child, and they still want to marry for status.

When it comes to having children, they could learn so much from the GLBT community. There are so many other options available to people in terms of parenting. If one doesn't want to be a single parent, find a co-parent (or two). If one doesn't have a man in the picture, go to a sperm bank. Or adopt.

Also, given how much people generally have to work to be successful, I can't imagine that a very successful career couple would get to spend much time together, much less with their children.

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A former Catholic priest, writing in Salon.com, said that he felt celibacy should be optional for priests, but might be a good option for workaholics who never see their kids, anyway.

• • • • •

While we're fighting for same-sex marriage rights, and/or for domestic partnership rights, let's not forget the bigger picture. No one should have to marry (or have a domestic partner) in order to get health care—health care should be for everyone. No one should have to

marry in order to get another body in the house to help with the kids—child care should be accessible and affordable for everyone. No one should have to marry (or have kids) because they need the security of someone to support them in their old age—our society as a whole should be doing this. Working for same-sex marriage rights, or for domestic partnership rights, is just part of the struggle for each person to be treated with respect and given the resources to reach his/her potential.

• • • • •

I have a husband who is absolutely a partner—my equal, my best friend, sometimes my foil in friendly competition, as I'm sometimes his. This is what living my life with someone—what "marriage" means to me. ▼

Marriage from page 1

conference at Harvard. She was one of the few lesbians there and it was, in some ways, a turning point in our relationship. I felt like her attendance was an amazing gesture of support and commitment, one that I will never forget.

Given that and a whole host of other "signs," I naively thought things would be easier; that my sexuality was a done deal and would not be fuel for so many difficult conversations. A lot of tears have been shed in my happy family, quite a few of them because we have a "mixed" marriage. It is not easy being bisexual married to a lesbian. Everyone assumes you are a lesbian, which is fodder for another article, and sometimes, even your wife would like to forget you are not a lesbian.

I recently found out that next year's national bi conference is to be held in San Diego, California. This is terrific news since my parents just moved there and my sister and her new baby live there. Loving the last conference, I have yearned to go to another one, so this couldn't be more perfect. The other night when I told Terry about the conference and its serendipitous location, her face lit up so brightly, I started to cry. I couldn't believe she would still be interested in going to a bi event and was genuinely enthusiastic about it. I knew how much she had enjoyed the other one but somehow thought it was a one-shot deal. Not that her participation was to placate me per se, but perhaps once was enough. Based on the expression I saw on her beautiful face, clearly this is not the case.

I adore my wife; she is my soul mate, my one true love. I will spend the rest of my life with her, through sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, through one neurosis into the next (hers and mine). I will not leave her for another man or a woman. I only trust that when

we are 70 and 80 respectively, my bisexuality will still be as much a part of me as my brown eyes and she will continue to accept it—perhaps with some minor trepidation—but mostly with the generous love and understanding I feel now. ▼

Update from page 5

"Defense of Marriage" laws like this proposal. Although, few have been as draconian as this one in denying all "rights and benefits of marriage," like those offered by domestic partnership ordinances, to unmarried couples.

Every state representative and senator needs to hear from constituents right away urging him or her to vote against H4840. The legislature could vote on this any time between now and the end of July during the ongoing state "Constitutional Convention," so please visit the Mass Equality.org Web site today to send a letter to your legislators. MassEquality.org is the coalition of LGBT, civil rights and allied groups coordinating the effort to defeat the Super-DOMA initiative. The Bisexual Resource Center is a leading member of the coalition.

You can use the legislative contact system at the MassEquality.org site to look up who your state representative and senator are and to generate an email to each of them urging them to oppose H4840, the Super-DOMA bill.

As I'm sure you know, groups like Focus on the Family and the Christian Coalition are extremely well funded, while MassEquality.org is not. Donations of all sizes are greatly needed to help stop this measure from permanently embedding a mandate to discriminate in the Massachusetts Constitution. Contributions can be made to MassEquality.org and sent to: 398 Columbus Ave., Suite 198, Boston MA 02116 or can be made by credit card at MassEquality.org. ▼

Queer Married Women

The group formerly known as the Bisexual Married Women group will now be called Queer Married Woman. It is a support group for bisexual and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. The group meets every second Tuesday at the Cambridge Women Center at 7:30. This group is facilitated by Denise Pruitt who can be contacted at dpp1029@aol.com for further information.

Tennis Tournament and Swim for Life Events

The Sixth Annual Tennis for Life Tournament is being held in Provincetown, Massachusetts on Saturday, June 15. The mixed doubles, round robin tournament will benefit local AIDS services and community organizations. And on Saturday, September 7 the Fifteenth Annual Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life will be held. This is a 1/4 mile open water swim and paddle; a minimum of \$100 in pledges is required. For more information about both events, contact P.O. Box 819, Provincetown, MA 02657; 508-487-3684, the compact@us.inter.net; www.swim4life.org.



Movie Review: *Kissing Jessica Stein*

Reviewed by Sarah E. Rowley

Kissing *Jessica Stein* is that rarest of movies about a woman-to-woman relationship: one that dares to defy the conventions of both straight and lesbian film. Smart, funny, and thought-provoking, it treads dangerous waters and leaves the audience to devise its own answers to the questions it poses.

Neurotic New Yorker Jessica Stein (Jennifer Westfeldt) paints passionately by night but toils in a newsroom for her bitter ex-boyfriend and boss (Scott Cohen) by day. After scraping the bottom of the dating bin, she answers a "woman-seeking-woman" personal ad in a fit of desperation and meets Helen Cooper (Heather Juergensen), a hip art gallery worker bored with her three competing male lovers. Despite Jessica's straight identity, sparks fly, and the two women find themselves on the rocky road to intimacy.

The film is unafraid to exploit the early sexual fumbblings of two ostensibly straight women for comedy, and much of Jessica's trepidation about her relationship with a woman is played strictly for laughs. But it's hard not to identify with the way Jessica cringes at her brother's soon-to-be-wedded bliss, or recognize the cost of closeting as she struggles to keep the budding relationship a secret from her family, her pregnant best friend Joan (Jackie Hoffman), and her ex, Josh.

Can you learn to be a lesbian? Is it safe to even ask? The territory *Kissing Jessica Stein* explores is politically incorrect and potentially dangerous. But to its credit, the film raises hard questions without taking itself too seriously. Tight writing and a skilled cast work to keep the film an endearing mixture of realism, fantasy, and solid one-liners, delivered with a verbal wit that betrays the film's theatrical origins.

The leads, stage actresses Westfeldt and Juergensen, wrote the film out of a desire for good female roles and an interest in exploring boundary-crossing sexuality. After an initial skit, they spent several years interviewing women of all orientations who, like Juergensen, had had "sexuality-smashing experiences." From this material, they developed a play called "Lipschtick" ("the story of two women seeking the perfect shade") that ran for six

nights off-off-Broadway. Extensive rewriting transformed the play into a screenplay, and luck brought director Charles Herman-Wurmfeld, a gay man whose coming out story paralleled their plot.

Herman-Wurmfeld has spoken openly about his own mutually loving affair with a straight man, which was ultimately ended with great pain by his partner's orientation. The film clearly violates the taboo in the LGBT community on discussing such affairs and brings one of the less-publicized intersections of the straight and queer worlds into the light. It's unusually courageous and honest to see a film recognize that love doesn't always parallel sexual attraction, especially when such an admission-like any plot that involves ostensibly straight people turning to a same-sex relationship-is anathema to current LGBT politics. Such honesty leads to an altogether atypical double ending that defies both straight and lesbian expectations. This romantic comedy is all about the fluidity of female desire, and asks more questions than it answers.

Though it's easy to disagree with some of the writers' decisions, they've clearly given the subject hard thought. Indeed, the film anticipates reactions to its story and consciously uses them for its own narrative purposes. One of Helen's gay male friends objects to her relationship with Jessica for exploiting gay life, giving voice to what many in the audience may be thinking. More amusing, in one scene Helen gets two straight men in a bar to discuss their obsession with lesbian sex as part of her seduction of Jessica—a scene anyone who's ever watched a lesbian film in a theatre full of men can appreciate. By cleverly working some audience reactions into the narrative, the film invites us into an unfinished conversation and navigates its troubling waters with verve and style.

From a bisexual perspective *Kissing Jessica Stein* is well worth watching, even if it doesn't provide the validating depiction of bi existence one might wish. Despite ample opportunity, Jessica does not come out as bisexual, and her path leaves you wondering if she had to pick one side of the gay/straight divide. But in Helen, the film presents a strong and attractive bisexual character, although her sexually adventurous, chic persona has some elements in common with the old promiscuous bi cliché. Here and in several other places the film undercuts a stereotype with subtle touches and makes a familiar image into a human character worth rooting for.

Jessica's Jewish mother is another example. The film puts Jessica's Jewish ethnicity front and center, and has fun with its conventions—the Woody Allen-style neurosis, the marriage-

crazed family, the lifestyle of those New York Jews who are upper-class, and comfortably settled in Scarsdale. But the character of Judy Stein, who could easily be a caricature, gives the movie its heart. Famed stage actress Tovah Feldshuh does an excellent turn as the mother who's a joy to watch on screen and whom you would never, ever want anywhere near your life. Her difficult but loving character anchors the film in a pivotal and touching scene.

Ultimately, I came away thinking about the desires that I take to the cinema—both to watch attractive women (Westfeldt and Juergensen fit this bill) and to see my own life mixed with wish fulfillment. I'm still looking for a movie that realistically depicts bi life. But *Kissing Jessica Stein* made me pause to consider the

lives of people following other courses—in particular, romantic relationships between women in which one partner identifies as straight. I've long struggled to support friends whose choices I don't understand or approve of, and this movie served as a reminder that there are many paths that blur the boundaries between gay and straight, and a self-professed bi identity is only one of them.

For all that, it's certain to beget controversy. *Kissing Jessica Stein* shows we've reached a point when some people are not afraid to tell unconventional stories about the vagaries of sexual orientation. And anyone who wants to muddy the waters of the gay/straight binary should care about that. ▼

Social Justice Internship: LGBTQ Organizer

Communities United Together for Economic Justice (CUTTING EJ) is a grassroots initiative working to build a statewide economic justice movement that is fundamentally anti-racist, youth centered, queer positive and low-income led. The group intends to mentor, train, and provide resources to 80-100 young people to do grassroots organizing in their communities. Partnered with pre-existing community groups in 30 different communities throughout the state, these organizers will develop community rooted campaigns for affordable housing, welfare rights, and workers' rights. The LGBTQ organizer will work with staff located on the Tufts campus to help outreach with queer youth-led groups throughout the state, writing letters, talking on the phone, and visiting potential youth organizers and community leaders within these groups. Students of color, low-income students, LGBT students and single parents encouraged to apply. Multilingual is a plus. Contact Mari Spira at 617-627-4087 or cutting4ej@aol.com.



Book Review: *The Hours*, by Michael Cunningham, Picador USA, 1998.

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

I've been wanting to do a review of *The Hours*, by Michael Cunningham, for over a year now. And with the theme of the issue being Married Bisexual Women, I thought this would be a good time to write this.

The Hours is a unique novel following the lives of three women in three different times and places. The three sections are entitled Mrs. Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, and Mrs. Brown—certainly emphasizing the "married" quality of each woman, two to men and one to a woman. First, Cunningham introduces you to Virginia Woolf at the end of her life in England. Then he updates Woolf's character Mrs. Dalloway (from the novel of that name) as a bi woman named Clarissa Vaughan living in New York City with her female partner of eighteen years just before the new millennium. And thirdly, Laura Brown is an unhappily married woman living in Los Angeles in 1949, pregnant with her second child, who is reading Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. And years later, Clarissa and Laura's stories intertwine.

The amazing thing about the novel from a bi perspective is that all three major female characters have bi experiences, and in the case of the New York Mrs. Dalloway, there is also a bi male character. One of the incredible things

about the book from a literary standpoint is that Cunningham writes in the style of Woolf in all three segments; her tone and rhythm being brought to life in fiction written sixty years after her death in 1941. If you are familiar with Woolf's style you will be haunted by how accurately it is mimicked.

Woolf's own bisexuality is well known. Her marriage to Leonard Woolf appeared to have been an enduring partnership based on shared passions and they established their own press together. Her love affair with Vita Sackville-West occurred during the early part of their marriage and though there was certainly evidence of much tumult from the experience, the marriage survived until her death. Vita is not a character in this book, but Virginia's sister Vanessa appears and a kiss passes between them that sets Virginia to thinking about having the character Mrs. Dalloway experience a kiss with another woman that affects her greatly.

"Clarissa Dalloway will have loved a woman, yes; another woman, when she was young. She and the woman will have had a kiss, one kiss, like the singular enchanted kisses in fairy tales, and Clarissa will carry the memory of that kiss, the soaring hope of it all her life. She will never find a love like that which the lone kiss seemed to offer."

A kiss is also significant in the other two character's pieces. Laura Brown shares a kiss with a neighbor woman while seeking to comfort her and later fantasizes about what it all could mean.

Hours continues on page 10

Endless Possibilities Conference


BiZone presents the first Endless Possibilities Conference November 15-17, 2002. A regional bisexual conference for people in NJ, NY, CT, PA and everywhere, it will be set on the Princeton University campus in lovely Princeton, New Jersey. Want news and updates as they happen? Send email to news@bizone.org. Want to present a workshop or be on a panel? Send email to program@bizone.org. Register soon at www.BiZone.org. This conference is a BiZone event, co-sponsored by Princeton Pride Alliance and done in coordination with Princeton University LGBT Student Services.

Hours from page 9

"She can kiss Kitty in the kitchen and love her husband, too. She can anticipate the queasy pleasure of her husband's lips and fingers (is it that she desires his desire?) and still dream of kissing Kitty again someday, in a kitchen or at the beach as children shriek in the surf, in a hallway with their arms full of folded towels, laughing softly, aroused, hopeless, in love with their own recklessness if not each other, saying Shhhh, parting quickly, going on."

For Clarissa Vaughan, the kiss that stays with her for years is the one she shared with her best friend Richard alongside a pond when they were not yet twenty. Richard is the one who has called her Mrs. Dalloway for years; he's now dying of AIDS and she visits him daily. Thinking about that kiss thirty years later, she wonders to herself,

"How is it possible that she feels regret? How can she imagine, even now, that they might have had a life together? They might have been husband and wife, soul mates, with lovers on the side. There are ways of managing."

Cunningham opens up these possibilities for his characters effortlessly. The stream of consciousness style allows the reader to follow the inner workings of these women. The considerations of their sexuality and desires are all part of the daily tapestry, alongside deciding which flowers to buy and what kind of cake to bake. It's an incredible book, and sure to be a major bi classic for many years to come. 

Poetry

Break Me

By 

*Sittin' all alone,
wanting to be home,
my solution is unknown,
but you can't break me.*

*Feelin' oh so cold,
growin' way too old,
"You won't make it" I'm told,
but you can't break me.*

*All these feelings inside-
like my strength and my pride-
are oh so easy to hide,
but you can't break me.*

*Scared of lonely nights,
fear what I might find,
But I'll win the fight,
you can't break me.*

*Though you might be wise,
now I've broken our ties,
I see through your lies,
they can't break me.*

*So try as you may
but here I will stay.
I won't cower away
'cause you can't break me.*

*It's time to say goodbye,
now you can't make me cry,
all my tears are dry,
you can't break me.*

*Now that you are gone
I feel my life's begun
and your game I've won,
you can't break me.*

*My heart is free,
thanks to me,
now I know you see
you didn't break me.*

Show your VISIBILITY this Pride Season!

- ◆ If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes.
- ◆ I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you.
- ◆ Racism, Sexism, Homophobia - Recognize the Connections.
- ◆ Bisexual Pride
- ◆ VISIBILITY

\$2.00 per button or 3 for \$5 (includes postage) to:
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

Frohsinn Club at 25 N. Quinsigamond Ave. in Shrewsbury, right off of Route 9. Contact Jane at jane_elizabethl@hotmail.com for more info. Tonight's theme is "Prom."

June 30 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Brunch will be at the Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston, about 1/2 block from Back Bay Station (Orange Line) on the same side of the street.

July 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "When Friendship and Sex Collide." See June 4th.

July 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 5th.

July 8 ♦ Monday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. Contact Rosa (rcarson@wso.williams.edu) with questions.

July 9 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See June 11th.

July 10 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See June 12th.

June 13 ♦ Saturday

Naturist Swimming Trip at The Ledges, 9 a.m. We'll be car-pooling to The Ledges clothing-optional swimming site in southern Vermont. Meet at the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. Bring a towel, something to eat, and sun-screen.

July 14 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Deb's in Cambridge, Noon. Please bring the usual potluck dish and drinks to share. If it's a nice day, we'll take a walk around Fresh Pond. Call Deb at 617-945-0621 or e-mail her at debmo@hotmail.com to let her know you'll be attending.

July 16 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Spirituality: Is Bisexuality a Part of Your Spirituality?" See June 4th.

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 5th.

July 17 ♦ Wednesday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Food, Family & Friends." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

July 20 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. It's our annual summer-brunch outing to Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square,

Cambridge. Cheap brunch and good people-watching. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

July 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Enjoy delicious vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. On Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line. Note: We are going to the Chinatown Buddha's Delight, not the one in Brookline.

July 30 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office at 29 Stanhope St. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after.

THINK AHEAD TO AUGUST!!!!

August 4 ♦ Sunday

BBWN BBQ, 12-5 p.m. at Linda's in Beverly. She'll supply some things to grill and people can bring side dishes and desserts. Contact Linda at lawong1234@hotmail.com for directions.



Swing and Latin Dance

Classes and Workshops: 6-week classes in Swing and Latin for Beginners start Mon. June 3 in West Roxbury; weekend workshop in Cha Cha and Rhumba begins June 2 in Roslindale. Info: 617-363-0029 or www.OUTtoDance.com

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

As Scheduled: Bi People of Color Potluck. Contact vines@eudoramail.com.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain.

Saturdays: G Spot at Martin's, 137 Pearl St., downtown Boston. 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.

BiWomen wants you!!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
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BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays: Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

Every Thursday: Queer Jewish Women Under 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR

June 1 ♦ Saturday

"The Floating Dance Floor," 8 p.m. A women's dance at the Frohsinn Club at 25 N. Quinsigamond Ave. in Shrewsbury, right off of Route 9. Contact Jane at jane_elizabeth1@hotmail.com for more info. Tonight's theme is "Lady in Red."

June 4 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "First Female Love." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

June 8 ♦ Saturday

Boston PRIDE!!!! Come out to march, come out to watch, come out to socialize, but whatever you do COME OUT!

BBWN Pre-Pride Annual Brunch, 9-11:30 a.m. Start the festivities on the morning of Pride with the bi community at the Annual BBWN Brunch. Held at the Community Church of Boston at 565 Boylston Street. Sliding scale donation (\$5-10) is requested. See page 2 sidebar for details.

Pride March to the Common, Noon. Meet the other bis at the brunch and march together through the South End and to the Common. Relax on the Common through the afternoon and don't forget to stop by the fabulous Bisexual Resource Table.

June 5 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

June 10 ♦ Monday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. Contact Rosa (rcarson@wso.williams.edu) with questions.

June 11 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Call 617-354-8807 for directions. Contact Denise at dpp1029@aol.com for information about the group.

June 12 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m.

All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

June 14 ♦ Friday

Bisexual Pride Dance, 7-11 p.m. We have survived!!! Dance!!!! Celebrate!!!! Everyone join in!! MC and special entertainment by the Imperial Court of Massachusetts. \$10 Admission, \$5 for students, people with low incomes and Cambridge YWCA members. Every admission gets one raffle ticket. Support our bi community and have a blast at the same time. (See flyer with the newsletter.)

June 15 ♦ Saturday

Safer Sex Educator Training, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Make a difference, have fun, meet new friends, and help stop the spread of HIV and STDs. Space is limited. E-mail Marshall mmiller@fenwayhealth.org or call 617-927-6032 for more information and how to register.

June 18 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 4th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Bi Pride: What Does it Mean to You?" See June 5th.

June 19 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7 p.m. Biversity and BiHealth are again teaming up for a social event and to distribute bisexual health information at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square. Come join in the fun and the educational opportunity. Diesel is located at 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line.

June 22 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Thornton's, 100 Petreborough Street in Boston's Fenway area. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Street.

"The Floating Dance Floor," a women's dance at the

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Come visit BBWN
online at:

biresource.org/bbwn

*Learn about BBWN, read snippets
of the newsletter, and find links to
many different bi resources.*

Food, Friends & Family

Family, Found-Family, and Food

By Rachel Silverman

Food is a part of life. The staff of life. And for me, it's what brings me closer to my friends and family. It's not surprising that I feel comforted by making and preparing food, by the rituals surrounding it. Being Jewish means that there are many rituals surrounding food: challah and wine on Friday night, apples and honey at the New Year, fasting on Yom Kippur, unleavened bread at Passover. Every holiday has at least one food ritual associated with it, and we have a lot of holidays.

Food plays an important part in my relationships; not just in my friendships and romantic relationships, but as an integral part of the relationships with my family. I learned to use a cookie press from Bubbe (my grandmother) when we would bake together on Thursday afternoons, and I watched in fascination as she would grind meat for knishes or chopped liver, which I would later eat happily. (I remember disappointment when eating her dinners; her specialty cooking was wonderful, but in a meal, things were either undercooked or overcooked.)

From Grandma, I learned to enjoy beans of all kinds and to bake buttermilk biscuits and blueberry muffins. From Mom, I learned to bake brownies, use a stand mixer, and follow and adjust a recipe, and I still call her for food advice. Many of my happiest memories revolve around being in the kitchen with one of them.

After this, it's not surprising that most of my closest friends are people I've cooked with. My friend Ailsa taught me to make challah and about many Orthodox rituals centered around food and Shabbat. We made several Rosh Hashanah dinners and Passover seders together. She would cook while I chopped vegetables and cleaned around her, and her teenage daughter would make devilled eggs and wonder if dinner was *ever* going to be ready. We had long involved conversations, and fell in love with each other, slowly, in the kitchen. The romance ended, and we both have other partners now, but the friendship has remained, built on a solid foundation of togetherness, beginning over a Shabbat meal.

Food continues on page 4

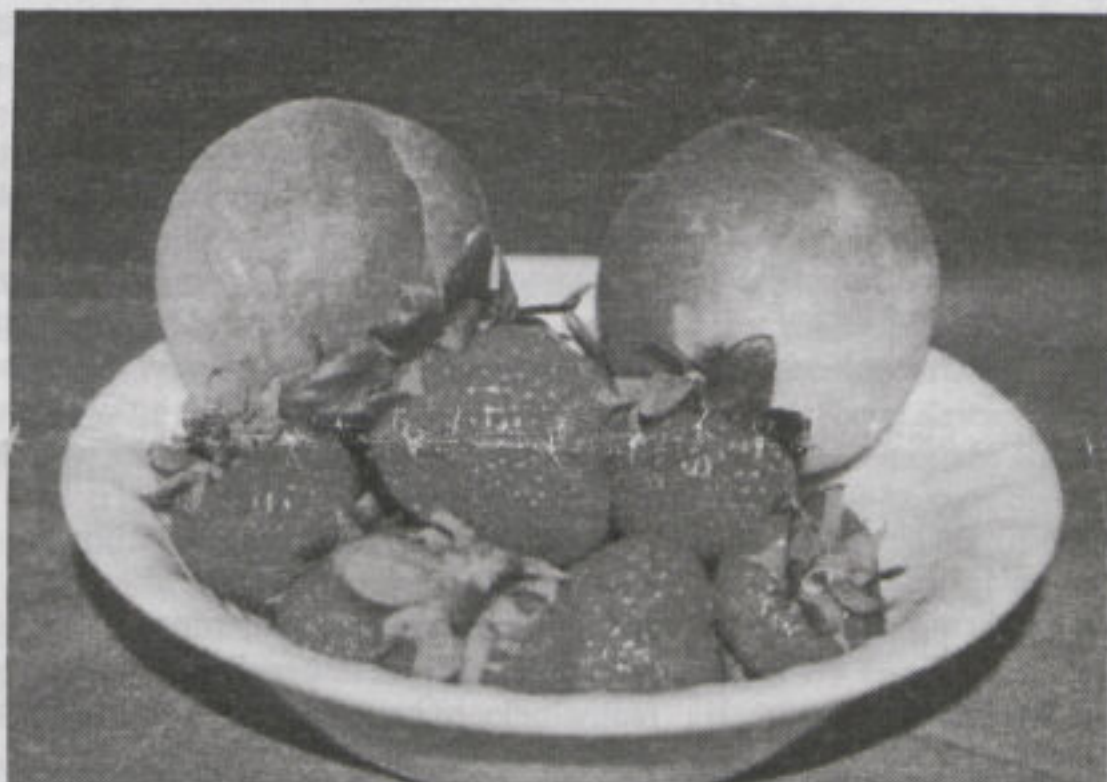


Photo by Natalie Rivkin

Nourishing Relationships, Nourishing the Body

By Rosa Leah

My first meal with Dave was pizza. Mushroom pizza. The pizza was unremarkable. I was naked and he wore ratty green sweatpants. I think we watched a movie while we ate, but if we did, I don't remember what it was.

My first meal with Stephanie was... well, I started a meal with Stephanie that was interrupted, so we later got together for lunch near where we worked. It was a classic Irish pub, and I had the pulled pork sandwich. I believe she had the chicken quesadilla. I didn't know, yet, how close we would be, as is so often the case of firsts with new people.

My first meal with Joel was a sandwich at Carberry's in Central Square. I didn't know Boston or Cambridge at the time, so months later, it was a revelation to walk by Carberry's and realize I'd already been there, unknowing.

Part of the fun of new relationships is that early exploration, before you know enough to connect all the dots. That first day with Joel, we drove all around Boston and Cambridge, and, after I moved here, it took me months to rediscover all the shops we'd visited. I would walk into a store all unsuspecting and have a vast moment of *deja vu*.

Nourishing continues on page 7

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Dan Taylor

Sheeri Kritzer

Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Elena

Wayne

Ilta

Linda

Rachel Silverman

Rosa Leah

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on
recycled paper**

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Editor's Notes

The three Fs, as I like to call this issue, started at the suggestion of a reader. Judging by the way I had to pull teeth to get people to write, it hasn't seemed like an easy one to get one's mind around. I did have one friend tell me, "This is *my* topic—food, friends and family *are* my life—but I have no time to write anything." But, as usual, the fabulous *BiWomen* readers rose to the occasion and came up with all sorts of things to share. Starting with the two front page pieces that really nicely pull the Fs together for us—and made me hungry, too!

Also, check out the recipes that readers shared. From salsa to jello and from shortcake to brownies-to-die-for—we know what you folks are eating. Sweets!! Ha! I say we make each person bring their treats to the next brunch, eh?

We've got an interesting selection of poetry in this issue, too. If you like Arden Hill's poem on page 6, stay tuned for more of her work in future issues. *BiWomen* has been really lucky to have so many poets send their work to us—keep it up!

On the more serious side, we've got an eyewitness account of the defeat of the Super DOMA at the State House, a tribute to June Jordan (well, it's kind of a mini-rant really about bi invisibility), and an essay on diversity by a very brave bisexual Tennessee high school student.

Have you got a topic you wish *BiWomen* would do an issue on? Let me know and we'll fit it into the list for future issues. E-mail me at nellythrustmor@aol.com and tell me what ideas you have.

Are you pouting because the summer is almost over? Stop pouting and come out and play. Check out the calendar for more fun things to do in the local bi community for the next two months. Don't miss out on Celebrate Bisexuality Day this year!! The information isn't all determined yet but save the date of September 22nd for a big event! But feel free to celebrate your business each and every day! I know I do.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
October/November is:

Bi to Bi Relationships

Have you been involved with another bi woman? Bi man? How is it different from relationships with straight partners? Lesbian partners? Are you both still bi if you are monogamous? What's it like to have bi friends? Bi relatives? A whole bi community?

Deadline: September 18, 2002

FUTURE ISSUES

*December/January
2003
Fantasies*

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
artwork, photos,
news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

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published, please tell us.*

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State House Super DOMA Fiasco Ends Well

By Rebecca Gorlin and Kimberley Shaw

Wednesday, July 17, 2002

We arrive at the State House at 11:00 a.m., anxious to avoid the hassle of getting through security and eager to get a good place in line for a seat. No one else is there, so we go into the House Gallery and listen to a session on various proposals. A few other people float in and out; we stay put until an officer tells us the House Gallery is closed until one o'clock. We go stand around in the hall.

12:00 Other anti-amendment people start arriving. We stand around and talk and hope that our worst fear of not having enough votes to defeat the amendment won't be confirmed.

12:30 It's a pretty good crowd for a work day. Among them is a man with an adorable one-month-old baby. (*Bay Windows* later reports that there were about 500 people, pro- and anti-, waiting to get in.) There are several other bi activists among the crowd, too, among them Robyn Ochs and Linda Blair. We are advised by MassEquality people to take off our "STOP the Anti-Gay Constitutional Amendment" and "ALL Families Need Benefits and Protections" stickers in order to make it more difficult for our enemies to spot us. Rumor has it that they will arrive soon in four busloads and try to push their way past us to get in. We are not to do anything if they touch us or call us names, etc. because they want to make us look bad.

1:00 Our enemies have arrived. They are wearing tags saying "Massachusetts Citizens for Marriage" around their necks. There are a few clerical collars among them. We have one cleric on our side—a Unitarian from Northeastern. They have a nun in an old-fashioned full black habit. We have no nuns unless they're wearing ordinary clothes. Some of them try to cut in near those of us who have been there since 11:00, but security guards move them to the back of the line. They are not happy about that. We are supposed to be let in by now and everyone is getting restless; at least we have that in common.

1:20 An officer comes over and tells us that seating is delayed until 2:00 and that the first 100 people in line will get in. No backpacks are allowed. In the meantime, we have to stand back from the doors so people working in the building can get by.

1:40 During all this, the pro-amendment people have been creeping closer among the sides; we are on our guard. Channel 4 arrives and interviews MassEquality folks. Other TV

and newspaper cameras start snapping.

1:50 The doors open; the officers let us in one at a time, guiding us to seats. Due to our early arrival and persistence, there are far more anti-amendment people inside than the pros! Robyn Ochs and several others linked arms at one point so that the folks who had come early got their rightful place in the Gallery rather than allow the late busriders admittance. One Pride flag is unfurled behind where we are sitting. We hear raised, shrill voices; pro-amendment people are fighting to get in. Some do and others are kept out.

2:00 The meeting is opened and "strong citizen interest" is acknowledged and there is a call for civil behavior. The Senate is brought in.

2:15 It is difficult to understand what is going on down below, but it finally registers that the Legislature has voted to adjourn, 137-53! The evil amendment is dead! Our basic couples' rights are preserved! We cheer and our enemies boo. We walk out cheering and the pro-amendment folks chanting, "We want a vote! We want a vote!" and "Let the voters decide!"

As a result of the adjournment, the only way the amendment can get on the ballot in 2004 is if the governor calls back the Legislature for a new session. Word is that she will not do so. ▼

Thanks Galore!

This Pride Season was a lot of fun for the Boston bi community, thanks to some great people organizing some wonderful events. A fabulous team of volunteers made BBWN's annual Pre-Pride Bi Brunch at the Community Church run very smoothly. Big hugs go out to [redacted] Deb Morley, Linda Wong, and Melissa, who stopped in for the brunch and helped prepare our lovely fresh fruit. Sheeri Kritzer was the mistress of the BRC booth this year on the Common and her trusty band of bis helped her sell bi products, distribute safer sex aids, and promote the BRC dance which was the following weekend. Deb Smith, a new member of the BRC board this year, orchestrated a fabulous night of dancing and frivolity with the Imperial Court doing drag and a raffle to help

BRC raise more money for its goal of hiring an executive director this year. See you next year!



A few of the participants at the BBWN Brunch in May at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain. Each month members gather together for a relaxing afternoon of potluck and good conversation. See the calendar on pages 11-12 for the summer BBQ and the September book swap.

Flood Looking for Contributors

Butchdykeboy.com is looking for submissions for its fall edition of *Flood*, a fiction magazine highlighting writers from the queer, transgender, gender queer, and bi communities. Pieces of less than 5,000 words are accepted; *Flood* publishes up to three fiction pieces per issue. Send submissions via e-mail as an attached MS Word file to emmet@butchdykeboy.com. The e-mail should include a cover letter, contact information and a bio. Look for the current issue of *Flood* featuring Dan Taylor (former BiWomen cartoonist and writer), Cheryl Lieteau, and Jackson Henry Cash.

Food from page 1

My friend Nyani-Isha is famous for her baking and cooking; as her fiancé says, she could bring anything to a party, and people would eat it. She and Ailsa and I have cooked together, and grown closer because of this. Ny and I cook together, watch the *Food Network* together, groan about fad diets together. And even when we are talking about deep dramatic subjects in our lives, somehow, the subject will always return to food...whether it's making food, working around friends' food allergies and restrictions, or simply what we want for dinner.

When I first met my partner, Jacob, both Ny and I were drawn to him; thanks to the magic of polyamory, we are both able to have him. And while I adore Ny and think her relationship with Jacob is a marvelous thing, where she and I truly bond is over food.

And my dear Jacob... with him, I have come full circle. He makes Shabbat dinner, and finds it important. His vocation is to create food that he will savor and others will appreciate, such as "magic" alfredo sauce and chocolate soufflé. He enjoys finding new restaurants that prepare his favorite foods as he loves them best, he delights in exploring for new grocery stores and farmers' markets, and he will make pilgrimages to favorite restaurants, dairies, and meat markets. He is a sybarite, a gourmand. He's not particularly adventurous when it comes to things wholly outside his experience, a little picky about what foods he likes, but then, if he weren't picky, he wouldn't be the Food God that another acquaintance dubbed him.

Looking back over my life, I notice that friends I cook with have a much better chance of becoming found-family. It's not surprising, really: food is as sensual as sex, with the same possibilities of wonder or disappointment. Those who treat food as mere fuel find it difficult to cook; those who treat sex as mere procreation find it painful. There's beauty and joy in both, if you care to look.

Mmmmm. Are you going to eat that? ▽

Poetry

By Fennel

I wish I could see the day when women
would loudly say
ooh and aah and yum! Over their dishes...
this is one of my wishes!
I wish we could eat with abandon and
never worry
what someone else would think
about the dishes piled in the sink or
should you really be eating that?
That's eight points!
What about cats? They never write down
what they eat,
in little diaries or little sheets
they just play and run and cuddle
and not let their minds get in a muddle—
they lap up life and we should too!
"You really enjoy food"
should be a compliment and not a snide
remark
so let's forget all the jerks and go play in
the park!

Food, Friends, Family

By Rachel Silverman

Sounds joyous
not in my house
tension
everyone snaps and yells
Helping? Don't take the
wrong plate.
on eggshells all the time
A Discovery!
Can be joyous
relaxed
even fun.
no upset, just friendship
laughing
great conversation.
I love a good party
Not having to
brace myself
be worried, drawn, exhausted
I knew it could happen
Many thanks to those with joy.

La Red
The Network

para Lesbianas y Mujeres Bisexuales Maltratadas
for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women

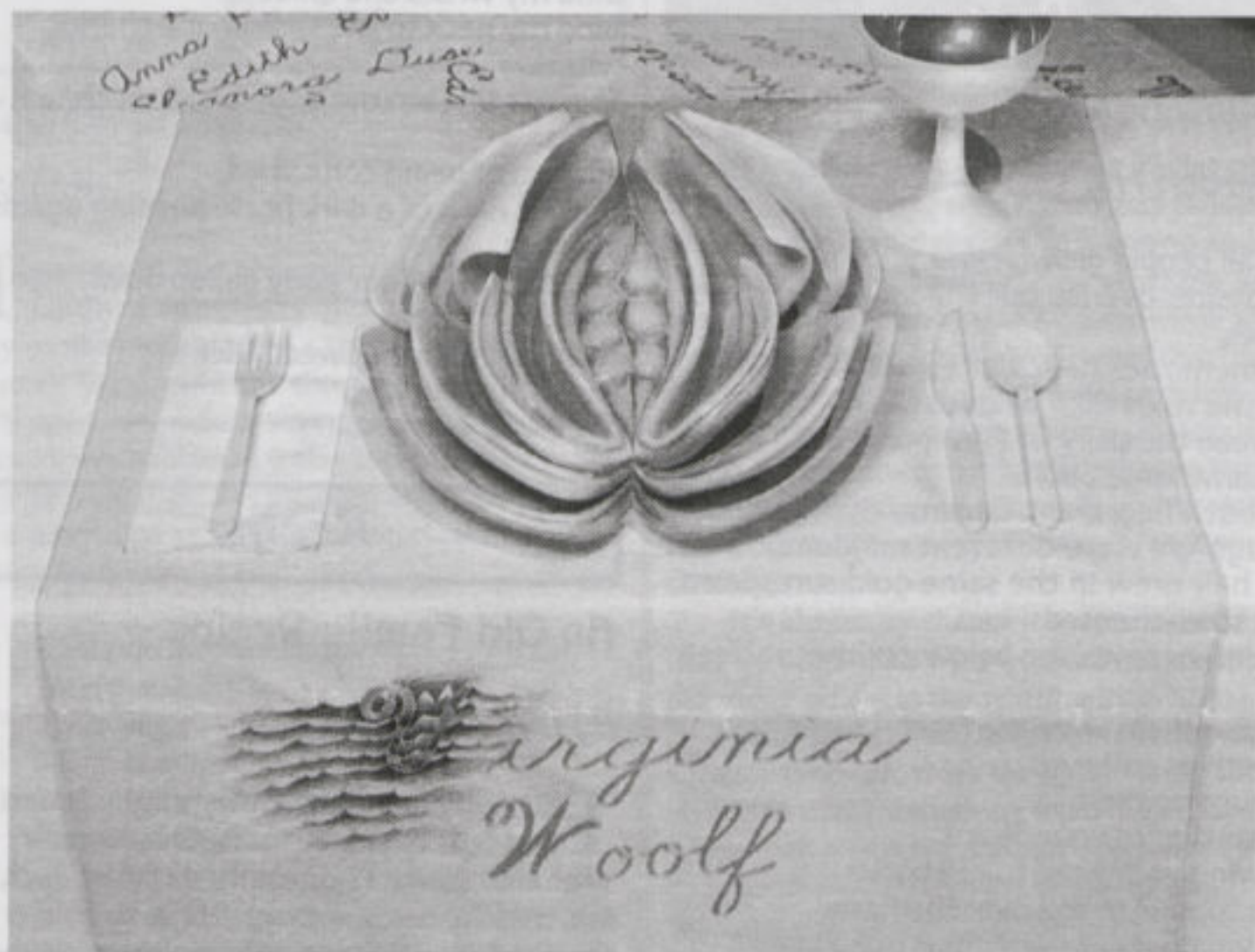
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Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* will have a permanent home at The Brooklyn Museum of Art beginning in 2004, after having a temporary viewing at the museum from September 20, 2002 through February 9, 2003. *The Dinner Party* is a multi-media symbolic history of women laid out as a triangular dinner table with thirty-nine place settings, each commemorating an important woman from Western civilization such as Sojourner Truth, Sacajawea, Susan B. Anthony and Virginia Woolf. The table resides on a porcelain surface, which is inscribed with the names of 999 women. Originally designed in the 1970s, Chicago said, "One of my aims in creating this work was to end the ongoing cycle of omission in which women's achievements are repeatedly written out of the historic record and the cycle of repetition that results in generation after generation of women struggling for insights and freedoms that are too often quickly forgotten or erased again." ↴

GLAD Publishes Trans Legal Issues in New England

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) recently released its new publication, *Transgender Legal Issues in New England*, a comprehensive outline of the legal protections of transgender people. GLAD hopes to raise awareness in the transgender, bisexual, gay, and lesbian communities as well as the general public about transgender rights in the six New England states. *Transgender Legal Issues in New England* is divided into three sections. The first section discusses how transgender people can pursue recourse against discrimination. The second section describes in depth other legal issues specific to the transgender community. The third section focuses on personal identification documents. The publication is currently available at www.glad.org and by calling GLAD's legal information hotline at 1-800-455-GLAD.

Recipe

Evolution of a Brownie Recipe

By Debra Leibowitz

When I was in my early twenties I discovered the best brownie recipe I've ever tasted. I had gone to the store and was overwhelmed by the sheer number of brownie mixes lining the aisle. I saw a "lady" in the aisle—I'm probably older now than she was then—but anyway, there she was, a potential source of information. I leapt at my chance. "Excuse me, but do you know which one of these is a good brownie mix?" Well, not only did she know, but she knew how to improve the mix to outstanding heights of culinary delight. So, I bring you the brownie recipe from chocolate heaven.

- 1) Duncan Hines family size brownie mix with the fudge packet inside. Mix as directed.
- 2) 1-3+ tablespoons of sour cream—go for it!
- 3) 1/2 of a large bag of semi sweet chocolate morsels—more if you'd like. Sometimes excess is wonderful.
- 4) Mix all ingredients together. Bake, cool, cut, and serve.

Watch all your friends happily eating these very rich brownies—even the ones who eschew all refined sugar and, if you can imagine, chocolate! Indulge your friends and yourself. Go ahead, make the "ladies'" brownie recipe. I'll be grateful to her forever.

Camp Camp for GLBT Outdoorsy Folk

GLBT adults will be gathering in Kezar Falls, Maine, August 19-25 for the annual Camp Camp. About two and a half hours from Boston, the camp is situated on a lake and has opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, swimming as well as basketball, tennis, volleyball, arts and crafts, dancing, hiking, and more. Contact the camp at 1-888-924-8380, info@campcamp.com or www.campcamp.com.

Poetry

Swallowing Seeds

By Arden Hill

Like all people grown close,
our desires overlap our childhoods and our stories,
our memories full of interpretation, myth
and the roles men or gods play.
We read the story of Persephone, even from
the same large book.
We both heard and became the maiden
though we were different maidens.
Our hair grew in the same gold sun spasm
that so enchanted
the darkness welling below our mutual feet.

For you there were the fateful seeds,
smooth as embryos
consuming them
submitting to your desire
allowing your head to roll back
your tongue to roll over the flesh
and what is that flesh if it is not a body?
Yours, maybe mine
Flesh as flesh
Pit as bone
juice as blood running down the clean curve
of your neck rolled back
in ecstasy
swallow
consume
I dreamed of being consumed.
The image of wheeled chariots rode me to
frenzy
forced me to the place I most wanted to go
forced me to the place where I am split
the darkness not merging with the light
the distinct gape.
Of course this place is only inside.
All places I sought to venture were far
too deep.
The split is natural
is not a wound
does not need to heal just to be accepted.
I dreamt of horses taking me to the cleft of
earth
I knew would swallow over me.

again this is natural
not needing to heal only to be explored
I dreamt of burying my head in flesh and hair
My teeth became polished seeds,
my saliva, juice.

So much is pushing me.
The horses are strong only because they are
my desires.
The earth is opening only because it is
myself.

Bind my wrists and ankles.
Bind my neck to the spokes of a chariot
wheel.
Spin me till I am the body of a fruit that
binds.
I dream of being consumed,
the hot neck of a dark horse pushing against
my own.
The muscles of our body gallop down into
desire
sweet of his neck, sweet juice
and from your kiss,
the blood is streaming.

Recipe

An Old Family Recipe

By Linda Wong

This is my mom's recipe for a light dessert that is often served during Chinese New Year, after a large 12-course meal of roast duck, fish, chicken, clams, and vegetables. You can commonly find this dessert in the larger restaurants in Chinatown or in Chinatown Cafe, a small, popular cafeteria, also located in Chinatown. Feel free to experiment a little. My mother uses fruit cocktail and vanilla extract. But this dessert also tastes good with almond extract and mandarin oranges.

Ingredients and Utensils:

2 envelopes Knox unflavored gelatin
2/3 cup cold water
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups boiling water
2 cups regular milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 16 oz. can fruit cocktail in syrup
1 quart measuring cup
8 to 9 inch round cake pan

Instructions:

1. Measure 1 cup sugar and set aside.
2. Measure 2/3 cup cold water into the 1 quart measuring cup.
3. Sprinkle the 2 envelopes of gelatin into the cold water.
4. Let stand for about 15 minutes.
5. Pour 1 cup sugar into the gelatin mix.
6. Pour boiling water into the quart size measuring cup till liquid level reaches 2 cups. Stir thoroughly till sugar and gelatin have dissolved.
7. Add cold milk till liquid reaches 4 cup level. Stir thoroughly.
8. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and stir.
9. Pour into 8- or 9-inch cake pan and refrigerate.
10. Cut into cubes and mix with 16 oz. can of fruit cocktail in syrup. ▽

Recipe

Comfort Shortcake

By D.B.

The dessert that always makes me think of family is Strawberry Shortcake. Whenever my mother would have a special holiday dinner, she'd make the shortcake and the whipped cream from scratch for dessert. Eating strawberry shortcake today is comforting for me because it evokes pleasant memories. This is a simplified version of the shortcake dough using Bisquick.

2 1/2 cups Bisquick baking mix
1/2 cup milk
3 tbsp. sugar
3 tbsp. butter, melted
1 qt. strawberries, halved and sweetened
Sweetened whipped cream

Mix all ingredients, except strawberries and whipped cream, until soft dough forms. Spread in ungreased pan (8 x 8 x 2 inch). Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes; cut into serving pieces. Fill and top each serving with strawberries. Top with whipped cream. Makes 6 to 8 servings.



Nourishing from page 1

Looking back on those early days of friendship and relationship, it can be frightening to realize how slim the threads that kept things together were. Developing a relationship is like making rope; each strand gets twisted with the next, until the whole is strong and sturdy. I look back and wonder what my life would be if that first meal with someone were less than impressive. What if rather than an unexpected shared delight, we'd each evidenced one of those traits that, even later down the line, drive the other batty? What becomes my strong foundation of friends and loves starts out fragile as a spider's web, cast one strand at a time.

It's almost by chance it seems sometimes, that we bond with who we do. I'm sure there are many others in the world with whom I could become as close as my closest friends. Circumstance provides the opportunity, and it is ours to make something from it. Perhaps the lunch with a new person that was soured by a bad mood would have led to a close and wonderful relationship somewhere down the line. And what would my life be then? Similar, but not the mirror, to what it is today. Such is life.

Food nourishes relationships, like it nourishes the body. I bake bread for friends, and the work I put into the kneading, the mixing, the measuring, is like the work of friendship. Mixing friends, introducing loves to one another, measuring time with one to balance time spent with another — the perfect process makes a savory loaf, a full life.

Eating can be intimate; eating can be public. Food, like love, makes my world go 'round. ▼

LGBT Caregivers Support

If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and you are caring for someone with ongoing health problems there is now an online support network for you. Family Caregiver Alliance has an online LGBT Caring Community Support Group to connect you with others facing the day-to-day challenges of caregiving. The group is free and available 24 hours a day. To join the group, visit www.caregiver.org/lgbt-sptgroup.html.

On Friendships: Letting Some Go

By Fennel

I've thought a lot about friends the last couple of years...why we keep them, what we give and get, and what are the dealbreakers with friends. We have varying amounts of energy to give to people at different times in our lives. In the last few years I've had some a-ha moments about certain friends and thought, "Why the hell did I stay with that so long?" Perhaps I wanted to be liked or to please someone that I no longer respected—where is the sense in that? The disease to please is an insidious thing. However, I am also a firm believer in kind and respectful closure whenever possible. This is a rare art in this world. I've given it to some who

did not give it to me just out of my own code of honor; then at least I can feel some peace, and it's not bad karma either!

It is a common saying that the foundation of a good relationship is friendship...I have had many relationships that were based more on lust or desire for protection, or some other such need. I found myself wondering afterwards, if I had not had those needs or that attraction, would I respect and want to spend time with this person? Sometimes the answer was a clear no, and sometimes I didn't have an answer at all. I vow to change this...friendship, trust, honesty, comfort, and passion, may they all dance hand in hand. ▼

BBWN List Serves

There are three different BBWN list serves available to *BiWomen* readers. All three lists are very low volume, but the one with most activity is the bbwn-events list where occasionally people will post information about bi community events or other events of interest. To subscribe to the bbwn-events list, send email to bbwn-events-request@lists.home.welcomehome.org and include only the command "subscribe" (without quotes) in the body of the message. For the other two (bbwn-activist and bbwn-chat) just put their list titles before request and use the same process.

June Jordan: A Bi Woman to Remember and Honor

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

"Bisexuality means I am free and I am as likely to want and to love a woman as I am likely to want and to love a man, and what about that? Isn't that what freedom implies?"

"If you are free, you are not predictable and you are not controllable. To my mind, that is the keenly positive, politicizing significance of bisexual affirmation... to insist upon the equal validity of all of the components of social/sexual complexity."

—June Jordan

June Jordan passed out of this life on June 14, 2002. A remarkable writer, poet, political activist, and teacher, June Jordan was also an out and proud bisexual woman. Dying at the age of 65, she left behind a legacy of 28 books that will, I hope, continue to inspire passionate dedication to social justice for many generations.

Jordan's passing was very sad to me as someone who has followed her work for many years. A friend of mine had given me a subscription to *The Progressive* back in the 80s, saying that he subscribed just to read Jordan's essays and didn't want me to miss them either. I became a fan for life and sought out her poetry and essays when new books would arrive. In her work, Jordan wrote about being a black woman in America, the child of multi-ethnic Caribbean parents who raised her in New York City. She tackled race, class, ethnicity, poverty, electoral politics, sexuality issues within this country, and she traveled and committed herself to the struggles of many around the world such as Nicaraguans, South Africans, and Palestinians.

Following the news of her death, there have been many articles written, radio programs, even a community memorial service held here in Boston at Simmons. *Sojourner* magazine quickly put her on their cover of their July issue and ran several personal testimonies about Jordan. And yet in none of these forums did I hear anyone identify Jordan as bisexual and this really saddened me. At the Simmons event, one poem of hers was read which clearly illustrated her bi vision, and sadly, I heard negative reactions to this from the audience. There seemed to be a desire to only celebrate her woman-loving self, and quite a discomfort with her man-loving self. The community seems to be proud of Jordan for the amazing work she had done but not comfortable enough

to acknowledge that that work came from a bisexual sister amongst us.

Call me paranoid, but I don't believe that if a prominent gay or lesbian writer/activist had died that their sexual identity would not be mentioned in the memorials held within our communities. *Especially* if their identity was an integral part of their political identity, which was very much the case for Jordan. I find the invisibility of her biness in these moments of memorial to be contradictory to her whole political vision. As the mourners extol her amazing political vision and fiery word-smithing, they diminish the power of the ideals she fought for. In her 1995 essay, "On Bisexuality and Cultural Pluralism," Jordan wrote, "I am a cultural pluralist. And, as sexuality is a biological, psychological, and interpersonal factor of cultural experience, I am a sexual pluralist." She couldn't be much clearer.

I feel the responses that I have seen and heard have been steeped in biphobia. One of the stereotypes of bi people is that we are not political *enough*, that somehow our sexually democratic tendencies keep us from being truly in one camp or the other and therefore suspect. For one thing, the idea of being in "a camp" comes from the old GL/straight binary model and I hope it no longer applies in a GLBT world.

Jordan herself understood why gays and lesbians might condemn bisexuality. "It is that fearful emulation of the history of the Dominant Culture's response to those who differ/who choose to be different. It is fear that an already marginalized and jeopardized status will become confused and or obscured and/or extinguished by yet another complicated sexual reality seeking its safety and its equal rights. But you cannot draw the line on freedom, you cannot draw the line on equality."

Jordan continues on page 10



Let the Sun Shine In: A Unique Response Concerning Utopian Diversity

By Cassie Griffin

Editor's Note: The following essay was written by 17-year-old Cassie Griffin, a bisexual student at St. Agnes Academy in Memphis, Tennessee. She submitted the essay to a contest that was part of the high school's Diversity Week. The essay was not allowed to be considered in the contest and was not published in their school paper as the others were. She was also told she had to apologize to her classmates for discussing her essay's censorship with other people before she would be accepted back to school after spring break. For such a young woman, her words speak bravely of her desire for a better world for all of us. After graduating from the school, Griffin noted, "So many people came out of the woodwork to support me; that part makes me feel really good. I hope the next girl who comes along...has a clear head and that when she comes out and raises the issue that it's not confrontational. I just wanted to be a bridge...I just wanted to open their eyes a little."

Having come of age differently than most, I can imagine that my concept of diversity digresses significantly from the relatively simple definition of the norm. Seemingly a typical white, middle-class suburbanite, I do not appear to stand proud as some sort of minority, and my influence on St. Agnes' homogeneous student body is not immediately apparent. In spite of this, diversity includes my contribution, however silent until now, to the more complex makeup of my senior class, my school and my country.

The minority group with which I identify has not yet been granted equal rights, by any standard. In America, a country for which I nonetheless have great admiration, I am regarded as essentially a second-rate citizen based not on the historical reasons such as color of my skin, the God I worship, the country from which I immigrated or the language I speak. With an admittedly shaky hand but an unfailingly sure heart, I take on the surging physical and psychological battle for my own civil rights by typing this one sentence — I, Cassie Griffin, am not straight.

The same government for which I am expected to maintain respect and trust often works actively against me, a fact which has been documented countless times not excluding just last week when an Alabama judge, quoting the Bible as his reason, took three children away from a mother because of her sexual orientation. Though such events occur

that demonstrate the inequality that still exists in our country for people who do not blend quietly with the majority, I still have hope for the future. As the diversity of our world continues to grow, an escalating number of young people take responsibility for creating and molding a world of tolerance in which they can play a role as worthwhile as that of their heterosexual neighbor.

I know that I myself have definite ideas as to exactly what this ideal diversity means. A diversified country means to me an expansion of the open-mindedness that would one day allow my girlfriend and me to form a family by marrying and both adopting children. If my state made it easier to hold a job securely without living in fear that an employer can and will fire someone he or she identifies as gay or lesbian, this granting of rights in Tennessee would be monumental in the quest for diversity. In the instance that my city and county required guidance counselors to take classes about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues, I would rejoice at the government's acknowledgment of my contribution to diversity. The week that I go a few days at school without hearing a teacher or student exclaim, "That's so gay!" would be a joyful one for me and, no doubt, for the other girls in my situation who at some point pass unnoticed through the halls of St. Agnes.

This simple removal of derogatory, prejudiced words from my classmates' vocabulary would make my day significantly more comfortable, and in my perfect world of diversity and tolerance, words such as "faggot" and "dyke" would be treated as they should with the same severity as the raciest names that will now get a student expelled if spoken.

Diversity for me now in this world equates with freedom and safety. While I know the inherent importance of my visibility as out overrides this emotion, I must also admit that I am afraid. I am fearful of even writing this essay because it opens the door for so many possible outcomes, including rejection by my classmates and school administration. Daunting and momentous, the task of being seventeen years old and making college decisions based on the perceived likelihood of becoming a victim of a hate crime places undue pressure on making exactly the right decision, as my safety could depend on it. The positive implications of the word invoke mental images

Diversity continues on page 10

Swim for Life

Saturday, September 7 is the Fifteenth Annual Swim for Life and Paddler Flotilla AIDS Benefit in Provincetown. This is a 1.4 mile open water swim and all proceeds benefit various Provincetown and Cape Cod AIDS organizations. There will also be kayaks, canoes, and row boats forming a Paddler Flotilla alongside the swimmers. Contact information: call 508-487-3684, e-mail at thecompact@attbi.com, or check out www.swim4life.org.

Autumn Gender-Free Dance Camp

September 27-29, 2002 will be the annual Gender-Free Dance Camp at the Becket/Chimney Corners YMCA Camp. Sponsored by the Lavender Country and Folk Dancers, the weekend of dancing and music is open to all dancers. Partners are not necessary, nor is previous experience. If you register by August 16, the regular registration fee is \$185, with work exchange it is \$105. All housing and food is included in the registration fee. For more information, contact Jim LaBonte at CampReg@lcfid.org or www.lcfid.org/lcfid/.

Diversity from page 9

of the ability to stroll in the quad while holding the hand of my girlfriend without having words of hate strewn at us across the lawn. In contrast, the idea of a deficiency of diversity conjures to my mind images of Matthew Shepard and other nameless victims of bigotry and intolerance. For both the world of today and my ideal, the existence of diversity in environments including high schools, colleges and communities, guarantees an easier, safer, unrestricted life for all, no matter how anyone lives.

One day I hope to see the embodiment of a truly diversified nation, but I know that my dream's realization will require many more years of intense dedication and work on behalf of people like myself. Even if we do achieve the intimidating goal of ethnic and religious equality, much more must ensue in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of everyone. However small the act may have seemed to my classmates, their simple wearing of a white button with the black inscription "I love my gay friends" on the senior class trip brought out the hope inside me that my sexual orientation would not always be a source of anxiety in my daily life. While my utopia could be a place so optimistic or imaginary that no earthly means could aspire to reach it, my opinion and viewpoint about diversity offer another focus for the emphasis of respect for differences among humanity. As the world evolves and progresses, I, for now, slowly take a deep breath and attempt to relax after realizing that one of my daily stresses, the politics of who knows about me versus who does not, just became solved—everyone knows. ▼

Jordan from page 8

I know the GL community hates the fact that some artists and political figures have had their sexualities erased from the picture. There is even a poster with photos of such people and the slogan, "Perhaps history has set the record a little *too* straight." Having June Jordan's life and work celebrated in the queer community without openly saying she was a bisexual woman is perpetuating the same form of silence on her life and work. ▼

Recipe

Homemade Salsa

By Katrina

4 tomatoes (chop up really good)
cilantro (it comes in a bunch, chop up as you see fit)
jalapenos (chopped as many as you like, depending on how hot you want it)
scallions (chopped up three)
lime (squeeze in one lime)
salt (sprinkle on top)

First chop up the tomatoes and put in a bowl and also the juice from tomatoes, then chop up your scallions, jalapenos, cilantro, and then squeeze in lime, sprinkle salt and mix. Then let sit in the fridge and serve with chips.



HELP SUPPORT BBWN WITH YOUR USED BOOKS, CDS, VHS TAPES, AND DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias has offered to help BBWN with fundraising. She will accept used books, etc. and list them for sale on various online channels. For anybook that sells within three months of being listed, 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. (The remaining 60% goes for online listing fees, shipping supplies, and for the actual work of listing, managing, packaging and shipping the books.)

Anything that doesn't sell in three months she will probably throw out or give away to make room for new inventory. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the September BBWN brunch (see the calendar on page 11) or newsletter stuffing, bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home! ▼

Come visit
BBWN online at:

[biresource.org/
bbwn](http://biresource.org/bbwn)

Learn about BBWN,
read snippets of the
newsletter, and find
links to many
different bi
resources.

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

cabaret at New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire Street, Cambridge 617-876-5310. \$3.

September 3 ♦ Tuesday

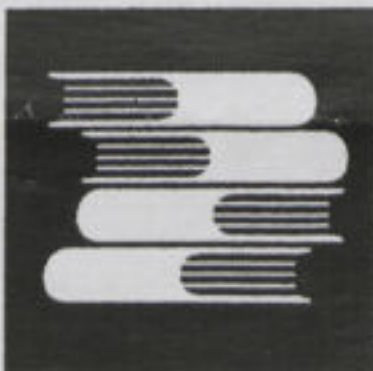
Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Dating: Building a Relationship, Pacing Yourself, Dealing With Ambiguity, etc." See August 6th.

September 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See August 7th.

September 8 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Ellyn's in Somerville, Noon. This is the third annual BBWN Book Swap so bring along some books you would like to find new homes for. Also, read the blurb on the bottom of page 10 to find out how extra books can help BBWN fund itself. You can bring those books to the brunch, too. Please bring the usual potluck dish and drinks to share. Call Ellyn at 617-623-5535 or e-mail her at nellythrustmor@aol.com for directions and to let her know you'll be attending.



September 9 ♦ Monday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. Contact Rosa (rcarson@wso.williams.edu) with questions.

September 10 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See August 11th.

September 11 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See August 14th.

September 17 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Polyamory: Loving More Than One Person." See August 6th.

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See August 7th.

September 18 ♦ Wednesday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Bi to Bi Relationships." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

September 21 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. You know you'll have a great time when the bis gather at Johnny D's. Fabulous brunch food in a nice atmosphere, and live music too. On Holland Street right across the street from the Davis Square T stop on the Red Line.

September 23 ♦ Monday

Celebrate Bisexuality Day

(or more affectionately known as CBD). All details are not determined yet but be forewarned there will be a fun event where people can gather, possibly dance, and possibly do other entertaining activities. Very likely it will be on Sunday, September 22, but the official CBD is the 23rd. Stay tuned to www.biresource.org for more information.



September 24 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office at 29 Stanhope St. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after. Contact Ellyn for details, 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.

September 29 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Location hadn't been decided by press time. Please call the BRC office at 617-424-9595 to find out what location will be hosting the brunch this month.

OUT to Dance: Swing and Latin Dance Classes and Workshops. Beginners start Monday, September 16. OUT to Dance welcomes folks of any age, race, sexual orientation or level of dance ability. More info at www.OUTtoDance.com; or contact Liz Nania at 617-363-0029 or liz@outtodance.com.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

As Scheduled: Bi People of Color Potluck. Contact vines@eudoramail.com.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain.

Saturdays: G Spot at Martin's, 137 Pearl St., downtown Boston. 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.

BiWomen wants you!!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for BiWomen
(sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- ___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- ___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- ___ Renewal
- ___ New Subscriber

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd

Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

Every Thursday:

Queer Jewish Women Under 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR

August 4 ♦ Sunday

BBWN BBQ, 12-5 p.m. Potluck BBQ and pool party at Linda's home in Beverly. Call to RSVP on the dish that you will bring, whether you will use the community pool, and for directions. Linda lives between the Montserrat and North Beverly stops on the Newburyport/Rockport commuter rail, and near Routes 22, 128, and 1A. Car pools may be possible. Call 617-699-5458. Or e-mail lawong1234@hotmail.com. This should be a great time on the North Shore. Come on out!



August 6 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "What Makes a Woman Attractive? Does it matter whether she is butch or femme?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

August 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

August 8 ♦ Thursday

BRC Letter Writing Party, 7-9 p.m. Come and help the BRC write letters to prospective donors to raise money to hire an Executive Director. We'll have sample letters to use and snacks for sustenance. The party will be held at BRC board member Debbie Block-Schwenk's in Allston. Contact Debbie for directions, 617-782-2754 or two_point_five_cats@yahoo.com.

August 12 ♦ Monday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. Contact Rosa (rcarson@wso.williams.edu) with questions.

August 13 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Call 617-354-8807 for directions. Contact Denise at dpp1029@aol.com for information about the group.

August 14 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

August 15 - 19 ♦ Thursday - Monday

2002 Bi Camp. Near Northampton, Massachusetts. Campers must provide their own tent, food, and transportation (sharing is encouraged). BiCamp provides showers and flush toilets, a place to pitch your tent, a fire pit, fresh water, beautiful wilderness, and the company of a few dozen bisexual and bi-friendly people for a fun summer weekend. Clothing-optional swimming is just a short walk through the woods. Payment is on a sliding scale of \$15-\$45 depending on how long you plan to stay and how much you can afford. Contact Wayne at bryant@tdint.com for more information.



August 16 ♦ Friday

Notorious C.H.O., at the Kendall Square Cinema. Let's get together after work to see Margaret Cho's new film. Contact Ellyn to let her know you are interested and she'll know the film info by then. Those who are interested can go out to eat/drink afterwards. Call 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.

Eight Minute Dating Extravaganza: Women Meeting Women, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Cambridge Women's Center and the Boston Center for Adult Education. At 5 Commonwealth Ave, Boston. For info and to register, Gretchen Voter at 617-267-4430, ext 727 or www.bcae.org. (Also, on Friday, August 23 there will be another extravaganza for Women & Men Seeking Each Other.)

August 20 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. See August 7th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "In a Perfect World, Who Would You Choose: A Man or A Woman or Both?" See August 6th.

August 22 ♦ Thursday

Cambridge Women's Center Garden Party Open House, 6-8 p.m. Annual Open House for women to learn about the Women's Center and to meet other women in the community. Bring a potluck dish; light snacks and non-alcoholic drinks will be provided. 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, 617-354-8807.

August 23 ♦ Friday

KVETCH, 7 p.m. A queer open mic performance

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Bi to Bi Relationships

The First One

By Anonymous

The first out person I ever met in the flesh was a bi boy named Jay in my high school. For me, as for many others, there's something amazing about the first out person you meet. Jay was the one who showed me it could be done.

And the consequences.

Jay transferred to my high school as a sophomore. We shared a circle of friends, but he was closer to my best friend than to me. He came out to me in the corridor one day. "You know that I'm bi, right?"

I didn't. I'd understood from rumor and other friends that he was gay. The word itself was new and different, slightly shocking, even though I knew what it meant. A door opened in my head.

I don't remember enough of Jay when he was happy, or his flamboyance and dirty jokes. I do remember his hangdog look at the junior prom, when he went with my best friend and my own date refused to sit at the same table. I was furious. But that was the least of the ways Jay was tormented in my school.

The worst incident came when another boy wrote him sexually suggestive letters. Jay responded back in kind, and the other boy circulated his letters—conveniently not mentioning that he'd initiated the correspondence. I still firmly believe he was trying to get Jay killed. He nearly succeeded. After months of assaults and constant harassment, Jay attempted suicide.

His aunt and uncle, with whom he lived, reluctantly committed him to a mental hospital.

A large group of my friends went to visit him. I begged off. To this day it is the only great act of cowardice in my life that I believe was the right decision. I was still recovering from a suicide attempt myself, one I had managed to keep hidden. I was afraid to see where people like me wound up.

My best friend never forgave me. I can't blame her for it. She spoke to me once about the horror of the hospital, a grim edifice built like a prison. "I can't believe they put him there," she said, breaking down in tears. "A place like that would make a happy person want to die."

The last image I have of Jay is sharing a lunch

First continues on page 5



Robyn and Gail in the ReneGAYdes, 1990s.

Many Years and Friends Go Bi

By Robyn Ochs

Thank you BBWN! Some of my best friends are bi. Actually, a lot of them are. And I met most of these friends through BBWN. Now don't get me wrong: I also have close friends who don't identify as bi: lesbians, straight women, gay men. But right now I'm talking about the fabulous bi women in my life.

Within one year of moving to Boston, I met three women whom I now count among my closest friends. All of these women came into my life through (what has since become) BBWN.

In September of 1982, I went to a discussion on bisexuality at the Women's Center in Cambridge. Toward the end of that meeting a woman with long dark hair and bangs stood up and asked if anyone was interested in forming a support group. I was! That group became the BiVocals, which later founded BBWN. A few months later I got a

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Dan Taylor

Sheeri Kritzer

Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Wayne

Barbara Gibson

Arden Hill

Frances Donovan

Liz Highleyman

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published bi-
monthly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Bi to Bi in Boston

I really like the theme "Bi to Bi Relationships" that someone suggested we do this issue on. And the different reactions that people had to the topic are a wonderful testament to the range of relationships we have. From friend to coming out mentor to lover, from a mother/daughter connection to one's connection to one's artistic expression.

Living in Boston there are so many different bi to bi relationships that you can experience. We are lucky to have such a vibrant and visible community where you can find friends, colleagues, book club mates, lovers, biking buddies—the list goes on. Though I have friends of all sexualities, I do so enjoy having a space where my bisexuality is understood and celebrated. A space where people don't blink when you mention an attraction to a man one second and then make arrangements to meet up at the women's club in the next. A space where you don't have to hide your pronouns, desires, or polyamory (or your monogamy for that matter).

BBWN tries to be such a space for the women who happen to find us. Our brunches and other social activities are there for those who want to relax and meet other bi people in a safe, supportive environment. And this newsletter goes out to people around the country and around the globe, (we currently send issues to the Netherlands, Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, England, Wales, and Argentina) providing a sense of connection across our communities. We're not invisible, we're not crazy, and we're not undecided about anything—we're just trying to live our lives in as truthful a way as we can.

If you are in the Boston area and you are reading this newsletter, I hope that means you are a supporter of BBWN. Being a member is fairly demanding. You show up at events whenever you want to, enjoy yourself with a bunch of diverse women, and you may end up with some incredible lifelong friendships like Robyn Ochs describes on page 1. It's hard work but someone's got to do it. I hope you're up for the task.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
December/January is:

Fantasies

Go ahead, share some of those secrets of yours. What do you long for? Dream about? What's your ultimate sexual fantasy? Has your fantasy life helped you come to terms with being bi? Have you taken fantasy into reality? When and where do you fantasize the most?

Deadline: November 13, 2002

Future Issues in 2003

February/March

Older Women in Our Lives

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

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Bisexual Resource Center Raises Awareness of Sodomy Laws

By Deborah Block-Schwenk

The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) has launched its Second Annual Sodomy Challenge. The Sodomy Challenge is a unique campaign to raise awareness about the existence of laws that prohibit certain sexual activities between consenting adults. Fourteen U.S. states and Puerto Rico currently have sodomy laws on the books.

Participants in the Sodomy Challenge use a pledge sheet to educate friends, family and neighbors about this threat to privacy, and raise funds to support the educational and advocacy work of the Bisexual Resource Center (BRC). The campaign ends on National Coming Out Day, October 11th with an erotic reading at Tufts University.

According to www.sodomylaws.org, more than 90% of adult Americans regularly engage in acts of "sodomy" (definitions differ depending on location, from oral or anal sex to vague offenses like 'gross lewdness' and 'gross indecency'). However, many people are not aware that laws criminalizing these activities exist. While most sodomy statutes apply to both different-sex and same-sex couples, these laws are often applied more rigorously against those in same-sex situations.

Sodomy laws are used as evidence in custody cases to prove that a gay or bisexual parent is unfit because he or she is legally a "criminal." In some places, those convicted for consensual sodomy are placed on the same "sex

offender" registries as serial rapists and pedophiles, and their names must be released to the community.

"Millions of Americans have their privacy threatened by these archaic laws, especially those with same-sex partners," said Pete Chvany, chair of the BRC's Development Committee. "We hope the Sodomy Challenge will encourage people to learn more and help get these laws repealed. At the Bisexual Resource Center, we are committed to a world where people's ability to love and the ways they choose to express that love are not criminalized."

Participation in the Sodomy Challenge is open to everyone. Information and pledge sheets to download are available at www.biresource.org/sodchal2002/index.html. For additional information, contact brc@biresource.org.

Brunches Make the World Go Around

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches coming up in Jamaica Plain and Arlington. Hope you can join us. For more information about the brunches or about BBWN in general call 617-623-5535 or e-mail nellythrustmor@aol.com.

Dear Editor,

What an excellent issue of *Bi Women* (*Married Bisexual Women*, June/July 2002)!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Vivienne's article on her bi/lesbian marriage—her experiences so closely mirror my own. My partner too was one of the few lesbians present at the International Bi Conference in Boston, and her support of my bi identity has meant a great deal to me.

And the whole issue was excellent: Deborah's musings on Marriage, Sarah's thoughtful review of *Kissing Jessica Stein*, Ellyn's review of Michael Cunningham's book ... all of it!

Thank you, *BiWomen*.

Robyn Ochs



Deb hosted a fabulous brunch in July which started round the table...

and ended with a brisk walk about Fresh Pond. Thanks, Deb, for a great afternoon!



Transcending Boundaries Conference

October 4-6 will be the second annual Transcending Boundaries Conference at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut. The conference focuses on bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, and other sexual minority community issues. Combining educational workshops, keynote speakers (including BBWN's Robyn Ochs), social opportunities, vendors, and information booths, the conference will be a weekend-long opportunity for GLBTIQ communities to network, educate, and come together. For more information about the conference visit www.transcendingboundaries.org or call or e-mail one of the organizers. Alice at 860-956-9299; Jay at 845-331-3616 or freeko@netstep.net; Lisa at r27@attbi.com.

Years from page 1



Marcia, 1980s.

job at Harvard University, and a year or so after that Marcia did too. We both still work for Harvard, and we are still friends and mutual fans.

Angie was in the bi women's support group that came out of the *second* Women's Center discussion focusing on bisexuality. We hit it off from the start. A doctoral student in psychology, she asked me to be a participant in her study of the effects of exercise on one's response to stress. We ended up close friends. Now she is a professor in Philadelphia, where she moved for love, but our friendship has lasted these 20 years, and I stay with her and her partner whenever I have the opportunity to speak in Philly.

About six months after I met Angie, BBWN held a weekend retreat in Provincetown. I ended up sharing a room with a woman I had never met before. She turned out to be delightful, and a whole lot of fun. Charnan and I ended up, later, sharing an apartment in Somerville, and she is still in my life. In fact, we spent a few lovely hours together at Walden Pond this week. She lives in the suburbs of Boston with her female partner and their son.

Fast forward a few years...

There was a woman who came to a lot of the BBWN events who was pretty quiet. But when we finally ended up chatting, I was blown away by her intelligence. Gail and I

ended up in the same swing dance class, and then chose to be dance and performance partners for several years. We don't get to dance together every week anymore, but we do have lunch every two or three weeks. She is one of the most generous and ethical people I know. And what a fabulous dancer!

And forward again a few more years...

Carla started showing up at BBWN events. There she met her life partner Megan. She also met me. It has taken several years for our friendship to blossom, and it is now an important part of the fabric of my life. We have a regular tradition, valued by both of us, of brunch at a local Jamaica Plain restaurant, followed by a long walk and a long talk.



Angie and Charnan cheering me on at my graduation, 1985.

So why is it that so many of the important people in my life are bi women whom I met through BBWN? Part of the answer is that in 1982 I was new in town, building *My New Boston Life*, and I was very open to expanding my circle of friends. The budding bi women's network happened to be there just when I needed it. Part of the reason was also the historical moment. 1982 was not a very easy time to identify as bi. (Not that 2002 is either, but it's a whole heck of a lot easier now than it was then!) We bi women were feeling pretty isolated and invalidated. What a wonderful feeling to meet other women who accepted this part of us without challenge!

Now of course, we are woven together by

Years continues on page 5

The Importance of Bi-to-Bi Relationships in My Life

By Deb Morley

Relationships with bisexuals have become increasingly important to me over time. Even before I came out as bi over ten years ago, I had begun choosing female sexual partners who identified as bisexual, or women who had past relationships with men but did not feel safe in claiming a bisexual identity. At the time I may have acknowledged this attraction as the femme in them stimulating the butch in me. In hindsight, I realize that it was our sameness in sexual orientation that drew me to them.

I met my first bisexual friend shortly after falling in love with a man. She appeared in my life like an angel during a time that I was struggling with how to share this new found joy with my lesbian friends. Her compassion and openness to my self-discovery was nothing I had ever experienced. It wasn't about supporting me joining the "bi team." It was about validating my feelings and experiences, wherever those led. I continued to experience "acceptance" from other bisexuals I started to

meet, and to this day, I cherish the non-judgement that for the most part, permeates bisexual communities.

While my lesbian friends are still near and dear to my heart, and there are non-queer spaces where I seek friendship and community, I gravitate towards bi spaces for meeting new people. I find it easiest to be me with bis. In friendship with bisexuals, my comments, behaviors and choices about same-sex and opposite-sex relationships are acknowledged and accepted without question. In romance with bisexuals, my attractions, desires and fantasies are not judged. In fact, they are usually encouraged! ▼

Pomegranate Season

By Arden Hill

First hard to cleave like a heart,
and we ponder the humanity of the thing,
as the knife enters and draws out juice,
or life, or blood,
the color for all three
being red.

First hard to cleave like a heart,
then, like a heart, it opens for you to consume,
split, and devour.

You pull out flesh and seed,
swallowing both,
without distinction.

I pull the hard pearls from centers of flesh,
and savor each divine flavor on my tongue.
There was a season when women were sustenance,
when women gave me pomegranates,
for no purpose other than to watch me
make the first cut,
and suck juice from the tender slit.

The process takes hours,
pulling sweetness from something I consume,
and separating the fruit
from a rind that is bitter.

International Bisexual Conference in Sydney

The 7th International Conference on Bisexuality is being held in Sydney, Australia on October 25-28, 2002. If you didn't know that already, you're probably not going. But just so you know what you're missing. The four-day conference will include a wide range of workshops on activism, culture, health, relationships and community; a welcome reception on the 25th; and the Biversity Party on the 26th featuring a performance by 23-year-old bi activist and singer/songwriter, Skott Freedman. And after all your international bisexual fun, stay in Sydney for the Gay Games that start on November 1st. If you can't make it to the 7ICB, please consider making a donation to the Travel Assistance Fund and support the attendance of a bi person from a developing country, a young person or a person with disabilities. You can make a donation direct to the Bisexual Resource Center in Boston (in US dollars) for the 7ICB Travel Assistance Fund. Visit the 7ICB web page for more information about the conference, <http://bi.org.au/7ICB>.

Years from page 4



Carla

Our mutual herstories. We have known one another through the various dramas and traumas of our lives: bi activism, job and career changes, the loss of a parent, breakups and new relationships, home ownership, and (for one of us) the birth of a child. One thing that surprises me is that all of us (except one) ended up with a female partner. All of us (but one) still live in the Boston area. And all of us still identify proudly as bi. ▼

Something About the Women

Love music? Ever dreamed of being a radio DJ? You can be! Something About the Women, the longest-running women's music radio show in the country, is looking for one or two women to join the collective that produces the weekly show. No experience is necessary, they'll train you. Time commitment includes doing 2 hours of air once or twice each month on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., plus occasional station meetings (about twice a year). The show airs on the Tufts radio station, WMFO, 91.5 FM, Medford, Massachusetts. If you have a passion for music by women artists, are responsible, flexible, and creative, send an e-mail to satwomen@hotmail.com and tell us about yourself.

Like Daughter

I have facilitated several bisexual rap groups through the years. I'm currently facilitating the Bi Rap at the Cambridge Women's Center which meets twice a month. (Every 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30-9:00, see page....) I started doing this sort of thing in Seattle in the late 1980s. This means I've often heard women describe how difficult it is to come out to their parents. They'd say things like "their religion says it's wrong" or "I'm afraid I might be disowned." Over time, I have heard women voice so many fears of anger and abandonment.

My own experience was entirely different. My parents were open-minded hippies. "Whatever you want to do is alright, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else." My family had all kinds of people for friends, including gay people. We had two gay men stay in our house for a while. When I was about 12, before I knew what my own adult preferences would be, my parents had an amicable separation and my mother had an affair with a woman. My mother wrote of her varied relationships in a book of poetry that was widely circulated. Though I don't believe she used the word bisexual in the book, that's clearly who she is.

Growing up in this permissive environment was at once freeing and confusing. I felt

By [REDACTED]

free to do what I wanted, knowing my parents would support me in whatever I wanted to do (because they trusted my judgement), but what did I want to do? And what about everybody else? I knew that most other people disagreed with my family about many things, including gay rights.

Through high school, I knew I was attracted to both men and women, but it was not a safe environment to express my attraction to women (and the guys still seemed "kind of gross"). My mother became aware that things were not going well for me in high school, for a number of reasons, so she swooped in and decided I should skip my final year of high school and attend college where she was teaching in Michigan. (I resisted somewhat, but in hindsight this was a good idea). My mother was an "out" faculty member, which made it easier for the students to express themselves freely. Though my mother and I didn't live together, we did spend a lot of time together. In that college I finally felt free to express myself to my peers and own my bisexual identity.

In the years since college, I have continued to enjoy the support of my mother as well as my father and sister. I feel so lucky to have a bisexual mother. ▽

Like Mother

I know I've been bisexual all my life, but I became aware of it in slow stages. During the time I was happily married to a man, the father of my two daughters, I used to say I'd love to have "a lesbian experience" but I was waiting for a lesbian to seduce me into it. When my marriage ended, I experimented sexually and emotionally with both men and women, and some time after that I came out to myself and others as bisexual.

At some point in this whole process, my younger daughter came out as bisexual too. I wasn't surprised. I was very pleased, because it was a different kind of bond between us. It implied a kind of mutuality beyond the mother/daughter connection. We've shared both the pains and joys of our identity: not always knowing what we wanted in a relationship, wondering how to locate the right partner, and negotiating being bisexual within a committed relationship with a man or a woman. Actually, I'd say we've laughed about it more than anything.

I respect my daughter's choices. I'm glad

By Barbara Gibson

she's found a community of bisexual women in Boston who are understanding and supportive in so many ways. I want her to be happy in a lasting relationship, as I am now (I'm married to a woman). I don't care whether it's a woman or a man she ends up with, just so it's good for her.

I'm also relieved that in our family and extended family, as well as in our social circles, our being bisexual is not a big deal. Though I've done a fair amount of writing and speaking about being bisexual, it's not the most important thing about me. I think that's true for my daughter too. Both of us have interests, talents, and values that are not tied to our sexuality in any particular way. At the same time, for both of us (and I believe I can speak for her) being bisexual is an integral part of who we are. Viva! ▽

Visit BBWN online at:
biresource.org/bbwn

Changing Skin: Transformation in Dance

By Kelley Donovan

When I came out a few years ago, I sort of took a break from choreographing to explore this new aspect of my life, now I have choreographed several new pieces. I felt more acceptance in the bi community than anywhere else and real support for my artistic interests as well as feeling accepted as a whole person.

The bi community seems to find art intriguing which I haven't found to always be the case in the larger LGBT community. I was surprised when I came out a few years ago at how different we all are in the LGBT community. My experience is that in the bi community I can be myself much more, and difference seems to be more celebrated there than any other group of people I have met.

The title work, *Changing Skin*, is a solo performed by Kelley Donovan based on images of a snake as a metaphor for transformation as it sheds its skin and grows a new one. The *Color Green*, as well as other dances on the program explore movement portraying images about strong and powerful women. With a collaborative spirit, the company creates contemporary dance described by The Boston Herald as "lush weighted phrases, liquid in flow... muscular, yet lyrical." This dynamic choreography is based on moving through rather than arriving at fixed positions; different from the

shape-oriented images of the ballet world. It is empowering imagery for women which highlights muscular effort, suggesting images of women as active agents.

Conversation Out of Silence, inspired by images of the Quakers and explores off balance motion and fragmentation of modern urban life, alternately peeling away layers toward simplicity, dancers on a gradual journey explore being present in the moment. Movement images of cause and effect suggesting the interconnectedness of all life as well as the transitory nature of our lives.

The program also includes the humorous *Plunge*, a dance described by The Boston Globe as "thoroughly refreshing." Seven dancers with tiny plungers get unstuck and triumph over adversity while unclogging a drain and being pulled this way and that, but

in the end one dancer wielding a huge plunger emerges victorious.

Kelley Donovan has been presenting choreography in the Boston area since 1990 and has performed with several local dance troupes. Kelley studied choreography with Mark Morris, Bessie Schönberg, Deborah Jowitt and received a B.A. from Bradford College in 1989. Recently, she was appointed to the Board of Boston Dance Alliance



Kelley Donovan & Dancers present

Changing Skin

**a dance concert of images about transformation,
based on experiences of coming out**

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Call 781-321-6188 for reservations or check:

<http://web.mit.edu/kdonovan/www/>

Gaylactic Spectrum Awards

The Gaylactic Spectrum Awards Foundation is pleased to announce the winners of the 2002 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards. The awards were originally created by The Gaylactic Network, the premier organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) fans of science fiction, fantasy, and horror (SF/F/H), to honor works in SF/F/H that deal positively with gay characters, themes and issues. Regular awards were presented in three categories for works originally released in 2001. In the Best Novel category, the winner was *The Song of the Earth*, by Hugh Nissenson (Algonquin Press). In the Best Short Fiction category, the winner was *Kindred*, by Alexis Glynn Latner (from *Bending the Landscape: Horror*). In the Best Other Work category, the winner was: *Bending the Landscape: Horror*, edited by Nicola Griffith and Stephen Pagel (Overlook Press). For more information about the Gaylactic Spectrum Awards including a complete listing of all nominated works and finalists, you can visit their website at www.lambdasf.org/spectrum/ or send email to spectrum@lambdasf.org.

Intern Sought

Keshet, a local GLBT Jewish organization, is seeking an intern to work with their director and volunteer leaders on a range of projects. Responsibilities may include: conducting outreach to potential members; researching work on GLBT Jewish inclusion happening in other communities in the US; assisting with grant writing and other aspects of fundraising; reviewing educational materials on GLBT and GLBT Jewish issues; assisting with occasional mailings and other administrative tasks. The internship will be shaped by the intern's skills, experience, and interests. Some help with administrative tasks such as mailings will be required, but this will be infrequent. Minimum time commitment is 8 hours per week. Familiarity with the Jewish and/or GLBT communities and community organizing preferred but not required; however, they are seeking someone with a strong commitment to GLBT inclusion in the Jewish community; an open, friendly attitude; flexibility; and reliability. A small stipend is available and work-study credits possible. For more information contact Idit Klein at 617-524-9227 or keshetboston@yahoo.com.

Boulder Summit a First for LGBTI Health Advocates

By Liz Highleyman

Over 300 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people and their allies gathered August 21-25 in Boulder, Colorado, for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Intersex Health Summit 2002. The summit, hosted by the Boulder County AIDS Program, was sponsored by the Gill Foundation and Bristol-Myers Squibb; the Astrea National Lesbian Action Foundation provided scholarship support.

The summit brought together health advocates, activists, healthcare professionals, service providers, researchers, policymakers, and others to explore a wide range of health and wellness issues of interest to the queer community. Organized by a volunteer collective representing the broad diversity of the queer community, the summit fills a gap left by the discontinuation after some twenty years of the annual conference put on by the National Lesbian and Gay Health Association. Two Gay Men's Health Summits took place in Boulder in 1999 and 2000, and several regional gay men's health meetings took place in 2001.

With over 175 institutes, workshops, panel discussions, and plenary sessions featuring many well-known researchers, authors, and health advocates, the summit covered the full gamut of LGBTI health issues, from the needs of queer youth, to same-sex parenting, to the issues of lesbian and bi women facing menopause and aging gay men. Body image, depression, same-sex domestic violence, and healthy anal sex were among the many topics discussed. Conference participants also heard reports from the International AIDS conference in Barcelona and the Queer Disability Conference held in June. Several sessions looked at international aspects of the LGBTI health movement, with presenters from Australia, Canada, Japan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

The 2002 summit was the first queer health gathering at which bisexual, transgender, and intersex issues were a major focus, and in which bi, trans, and intersex people played an integral role in the planning process. The first conference plenary was devoted to intersex issues and why they matter to the queer health movement. Cheryl Chase and Emi Koyama discussed the intersex agenda, emphasizing that intersex advocates are not arguing for the abolition of gender or that children with intersex conditions should not be assigned a gender at birth. Rather, said Chase, doctors and parents should make their "best guess" about a child's future gender, but should not perform surgery to correct intermediate genitalia and

should be open to the possibility that the child's gender identity may change.

Another new feature was a full track of workshops focusing on drug use, harm reduction, and treatment in the queer community, including a session on the history and meaning of drug use in the gay circuit party scene. "We need to address pleasure and desire as well as risk," said City University of New York professor of public health Richard Elovich, who coordinated the track. "Harm reduction is not about ideology, it's about facing reality."

Pleasure and desire were themes throughout the conference. Anna Forbes of the Global Campaign for Microbicides and Chris Bartlett led a session on the development of microbicides and how they might be used by gay men to prevent disease transmission during anal sex. For example, do men who bareback simply dislike condoms, or does unprotected sex hold deeper meanings? Might anal microbicides offer a compromise between condom use and throwing caution to the wind? "Microbicides are harm reduction," said Forbes. "Studying and funding microbicides is a no-brainer, even if they do not provide 100 percent protection."

Friday's plenary looked at the history of the LGBTI health movement, where it is now, and where it is headed. Workshops on the lesbian health movement and AIDS activism explored the lessons to be learned from earlier movements. Organizers and participants expressed the desire to build a diverse, grassroots queer health movement — and to push LGBTI groups to include health issues and health organizations to include LGBTI issues.

"During the past decade it has felt as if the locus of control of an LGBTI health agenda was moving away from our communities and more and more towards governmental bodies," said summit convenor Eric Rofes. "Our efforts to professionalize our movement and support the creation of networks of queers working within public health systems, queer elected officials, queer executive directors of AIDS and LGBTI organizations, and queer academic researchers cannot do the work of a health movement that puts people on the street making demands and holding public officials accountable."

Participants came away from the summit with plans to organize separate gay, lesbian, transgender, and other meetings in odd-numbered years — the next Gay Men's Health Summit is already being planned for 2003 —


Summit continues on page 10

New Words Bookstore Making Big Changes

New Words Bookstore, open in Cambridge, Massachusetts since 1974, recently announced they will be closing the store in order to move forward with their new plan to create The Center for New Words. The Center, opening within the next year, will be a non-profit organization offering diverse and innovative programs—all geared to women's words and empowerment—that range from literacy, to reading and writing programs, to producing and selling written materials, to keeping a lively literary and civic exchange of ideas in our communities. New Words intends to stay in Cambridge and they have the support of the Cambridge Women's Commission and other city offices to help make it a reality.

The store needs the support of the community it has served for the last twenty-eight years. If you can, do your holiday and birthday shopping now and buy up all the books you can at their sale which runs until October 6th. There is also an online Celebrity Auction to raise funds for New Words Live and provide

transitional support for this project. Here's your chance to bid on many exciting, one-of-a-kind items, including Leslie Feinberg's necktie, a guitar lesson with Pamela Means, dinner made for you by Letta Neely, and the opportunity to have Dorothy Allison record your outgoing answering machine message. You can check it all out at <http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/newwordslive>.

And don't miss out on the Fall Reading Series, which will be as fabulous as always. Sponsored by New Words Live, most of these events will be held in the bookstore's back Reading Room—which will remain the venue for their programs and for their transitional activities in the coming year. 

New Words Bookstore
186 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-876-5310 phone
newwords@world.std.com
www.newwordsbooks.com

Endless Possibilities Conference

On the weekend of November 15-17, BiZone is hosting a regional bisexual conference for people in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and everywhere! The conference is being held on Princeton University campus in Princeton, New Jersey and is co-sponsored by PrincetonPride Alliance and done in coordination with Princeton University LGBT Student Services. If you'd like news and updates as they happen, send e-mail to news@bizone.org or register at www.BiZone.org.

What I Discovered, Megan

By Frances Donovan

When I met you there were no flowers,
no music, and you wore no ostrich feathers in
your hair.

I read you an Italian poem.

A dark-haired boy sat down beside us.

Later he told you I was trying to seduce you
and said he loved you.

Later he plucked the strings of his guitar and
did not answer.

Later he ran away to New York City.

When I saw you next I was thinking of your
pants,
the way they curved on you and would never
curve on me.

They came all the way from Paris.

You hunched inside of them
and looked at me.

You asked if I meant to seduce you with that
poem.

But really I was just reading it,
having translated it the night before
after reading too much Keats,
staying up with a small cough,
and cooking an omelet for breakfast
which I called a frittata.

Like that poem,
the rise and fall of your chest, the way you

smell,
or the way you hunch in pants from Paris
can mean different things to different people.
I've come to understand the nature of your
perfume.

It is not about flowers
or music or ostrich feathers
but about sex, raw and trembling on the page.



A large group came out for the brunch/book swap at Ellyn's in September. If you would like to host a brunch call Ellyn at 617-623-5535.

Women's Health Forum

Fenway Community Health is sponsoring the 5th Annual Lesbian & Bisexual Women's Health Research Forum on Friday, October 4 at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. The theme of the Forum is: Sexual Minority Women of Color: A Summit for Building Community Research Partnerships. The purpose of this event is to engage community-based organizations that may serve this population and foster a dialogue with researchers and community members. The Forum will identify the research interests of people who provide services to sexual minority women of color in Boston; identify research initiatives which will assist with the elimination of health disparities for lesbian and bi women of color; identify the health care needs of lesbian and bi women of color in Boston; identify barriers to conducting research which is sensitive to the concerns of sexual minority women of color and to the special outreach strategies necessary for study recruitment and develop workable solutions towards overcoming these barriers. Contact Rhonda Linde, Ph.D., Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston, MA 02115, 617-927-6206, rlinde@fenwayhealth.org

First from page 1

table with him in the school cafeteria. He had been hospitalized for six months; it was impossible for him to make up the schoolwork. I remember his flat tone and the dead look in his eyes as he stared down at the plastic cutlery on his tray.

"I hate plastic forks," he said. "It's all they'd let us have in the hospital." The reasoning behind that rule still chills my blood.

Jay ran away from home before the end of the year. The last I heard of him he was heavily into drugs and living on the streets in New York City. For years I assumed he was dead.

It's only as I grew older, and realized that some of us—the lucky ones—can come back from the most remarkable places, that I recast Jay's life in my mind as a question mark. I don't know what happened to him, and probably never will. But I prefer to believe that he found a way out and a path to redemption.

As I did, when I graduated from high school in 1995. Survival is an amazing gift.

But the lesson of what happened to Jay stayed locked inside me, unacknowledged. He had shown me both the possibility of being bi and the potential punishment. Even in high school, I knew we had more in common than the obvious.

When I met Jay at age sixteen, I was beginning to wonder whether I had a sexual orientation at all. I decided to wait and find out. When I was seventeen, I fell in love with a man and thought I had the answer. But the door Jay had opened stayed ajar. He had taught me that the path could be more complicated.

When I was nineteen, I started to think seriously about my sexual attraction to women, and wonder if I would ever feel the same full-blown emotional passion that I had felt for a man.

The day after I turned twenty-one, I came out to myself as bisexual. No one has yet committed me to a mental hospital.

And wherever Jay is, I owe him my gratitude. ▽

Freedman Wins OUTMusic Award For Best New Recording

In June, 23-year-old bisexual activist and singer/songwriter Skott Freedman won an OUTMusic Award for Best New Recording-Male. *BiWomen* interviewed Freedman back in the April/May issue. He has been appearing at Pride events across the country this summer and also performs and speaks at many college campuses during the school year.

Freedman has appeared on NBC News, ABC's "Daybreak", national radio programs "This Way Out" and "AfterHours", and in national publications such as *Billboard Magazine* and *The Guide*. It's great to see an out bi performer getting some attention and a major queer music award! Congratulations Scott!! For online information see Scott's website at www.skottfreedman.com. ▽

Summit from page 8

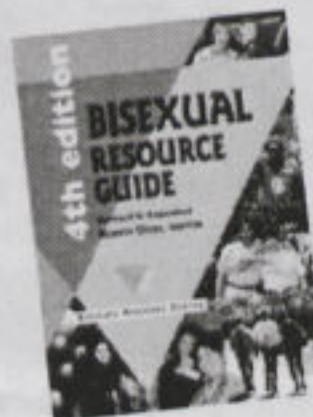
and unified LGBTI summits in alternate years.

A theme of the earlier gay men's health summits was looking beyond AIDS to other health issues that affect the community. At this year's summit the focus was even broader, looking beyond pathologies and problems to address wellness and strengths of the LGBTI community—what organizing collective member T. Scott Pegues called an "empowered, asset-based, wellness model of health."

"Our communities are harmed tremendously by portraying them as diseased. Is it possible to truly empower when we consistently represent a community utilizing deficit-based constructs?" asked Rofes. "Let's think of LGBTI people as resilient and creative and persevering more often than we think of our people as damaged."

For more information or to get involved in planning for future health summits, visit www.healthsummit2002.org or e-mail lgbihealthsummit2002@aol.com. ▽

Do you have
your
*Bisexual
Resource
Guide* yet?



To order, send check or money order for \$8 or get 2 for \$15 (payable to BRC), with your name and address, to: BRC, Dept. BBWN, P.O. Box 1026, Boston, MA 02117.

Or check out the BRC Web page at www.biresource.org to buy the Guide and other great bi products.

October 24 ♦ Thursday

New Words Reading, 7:00 p.m. Amy Bloom reads from her new book, *Normal: Transsexual CEOs, Crossdressing Cops, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude*. Held at Simmons College Alumnae Hall, 321 Brookline Avenue, Boston.

October 27 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Megan and Carla's in Jamaica Plain, 11 a.m. Come and relax with a bunch of great bi women. Bring a dish and drinks to share. Call 617-522-8819 for directions.

October 30 ♦ Wednesday

New Words Reading, 7:00 p.m. Elisabeth Eaves reads from her new book, *Bare: On Women, Dancing, Sex and Power*, about her personal experience of stripping. 186 Hampshire Street, Cambridge, 617-876-5310. Nearest T is Central Square on the Red Line.

November 2 ♦ Saturday

House Party to benefit the Alternatives to Marriage Project. AtMP is a national organization for unmarried people, including those who choose not to marry, can't marry, or live together before marriage. At the party, AtMP co-founders Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller will sign copies of their new book, *Unmarried To Each Other: The Essential Guide to Living Together as an Unmarried Couple*. E-mail atmp@unmarried.org or call 781-793-0296 for an invitation.

November 5 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is "Diverse Bisexual Lifestyles: Come talk about what works for you, and what doesn't!" See October 1st.

November 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See October 2nd.

November 10 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Bowling Brunch, noon.

Meet at Lanes and Games on Rt 2 in Cambridge. We'll bowl a few strings and then go find a place to have a late lunch. Be ready for some big laughs; we did this last year and had a great time.

Contact Ellyn if you are interested in going, 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.

November 12 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See October 9th.

November 13 ♦ Wednesday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Fantasies" See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.



November 14 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See October 9th.

November 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be held at the ever-popular Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville. The Davis Square stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

November 19 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Tonight's topic is "Communication for Bisexuals: Openness, and setting limits." See October 1st.

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See October 2nd.

November 24 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Annie's in Arlington, noon. Annie asks everyone to bring a picture of themselves when they were younger to show each other. We might go for a walk by Mystic Lake (right next to my house), weather permitting. Bring a dish and drinks to share. Call Annie at 781-646-2379 or e-mail at kalamari@juno.com.

November 26 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office at 29 Stanhope St. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us on the fourth floor of the Living Center. Socialize during and after when we'll drop by Club Cafe for something to soothe you at the end of the day.



Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

As Scheduled: Bi People of Color Potluck. Contact vines@eudoramail.com.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain.

Saturdays: G Spot at Martin's, 137 Pearl St., downtown Boston. 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.

BiWomen wants you!!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
___ Renewal
___ New Subscriber

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd

Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

Every Thursday:

Queer Jewish Women Under 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR

October 1 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Gender Identity: Cross-dressing, Role-Playing and Transsexuality." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

October 2 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

October 4-6 ♦ Friday - Sunday

Transcending Boundaries Conference. This bi and trans conference will be held at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut. See sidebar on page 4 for details.

October 8 ♦ Tuesday

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

October 9 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is on the fourth floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

October 11 ♦ Friday

Benefit for Boston GLASS, 7 p.m. Writer Dorothy Allison will read from a new edition of her collection, *Trash*; music will be provided by Zili Roots; and there will be the Boston premiere of *How*

I'm Livin', a production of the Boston GLASS Video project—all in one night! The benefit will be held at Blackman Auditorium, Ell Building, Northeastern University. Cost is \$25 and includes a new edition of *Trash*. Boston GLASS Community Center is a drop-in supportive services program for LGBTQ youth. For more info contact 617-266-3349 or visit www.bostonglass.org.

October 11 ♦ Friday

National Coming Out Day, 7-9 p.m. People around the world take the opportunity to come out to people they know and to support those who have newly come into our communities. Local campuses and organizations sponsor visibility actions and events. Check out your local area for details.

Sodomy Challenge/Coming Out Day Celebration, 7-10 p.m. The Bisexual Resource Center marks the end of their second annual sodomy awareness campaign (see page 3) with an erotic reading by famed local author Cecilia Tan at Tufts University. Check out www.biresource.org or call 617-627-3925 for details.

October 15 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See October 2nd.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "What's goin' on? Extended check-in: come talk about your personal issues as they relate to bisexuality, or just listen." See October 1st.

October 19 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Thornton's 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway area. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

HELP SUPPORT BBWN WITH YOUR USED BOOKS, CDS, VHS TAPES, AND DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias has offered to help BBWN with fundraising. She will accept used books, etc. and list them for sale on various online channels. For any book that sells within three months of being listed, 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. (The remaining 60% goes for online listing fees, shipping supplies, and for the actual work of listing, managing, packaging and shipping the books.)

Anything that doesn't sell in three months she will probably throw out or give away to make room for new inventory. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!

Fantasies

Tom & Mary

By Dove

This is the last one," said Tom as he passed me the largest rock we had dealt with all afternoon. I knew it was not the last, but that his words were meant as encouragement. That we were close to being done with building the fire circle, and that the remaining rocks were smaller. I threw the stone down with a mighty groan, cussing it into place. Tom looked up at me and laughed. He sat down and lit a bowl. I walked atop the circle of stones, pushing each deeper into the earth. I thought about my father's clodhoppers as I stared down at my own hiking boots. I loved the groundedness of heavy boots. I loved having a male friend with whom I could repair engines, chop wood and build fire circles. It seemed like the only thing Tom expected from me was good humor, which most days I could deliver. From him I expected equality. To be a partner in lifting, hoisting, carrying and building. Not to have my

T&M continues on page 4



Collages by Elynn Ruthstrom

After A Kiss

By Fae Brown

My dear O,

So, the last time I wrote, I sent you the safe fantasy. The one where we meet and sit side-by-side and hold hands while feeling the energy between us. The one that since we've only kissed seemed least likely to risk our friendship or reveal anything that might make you feel uncomfortable when we finally meet in person

After continues on page 5

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias
Robyn Ochs
Deb Morley
Debbie Block-
Schwenk
Nomi Siegelman
Wayne Bryant
Steph Miserlis
Carla Imperial
Megan Jewett
Annie Goglia

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

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The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Pure Fantasy

OK, stay with me, I'm fantasizing. There is this vibrant, active women's organization. All of these women really care that they provide a space for each other and they all contribute bits of time and energy to keep the organization running. One person picks up the mail from the post office box and makes sure people get the right information from it. A few people talk to each other every few weeks and plan fun activities to bring folks together and get people to host brunches. Other people write for the newsletter and plan topics for future issues. Someone does the layout for the newsletter and makes sure it gets to the printer. Yet another person organizes the mailing and gets it to the post office.

I love this organization. I love BBWN. *But I am not BBWN.* I won't say how many of the above tasks I actually do for BBWN, but suffice it to say... enough. (And thanks to the fabulous women who are already doing some of those tasks.) But my fantasy is that this organization be much more of a shared experience. I want people to feel it is theirs to do with it what they want. Do you want to invite people to do something you like to do? Do it! Plan a summer hike? Day at the beach? Visit a museum? Have the newsletter theme about bisexuality and _____? Yes!

We've tried at different times to have a system of Divas, a title of distinction for people who do various small tasks that keep the organization running. I think it's time to try to get a system going again and try to get a feeling of community back in the group.

In the next issue we will advertise a gathering to bring together those interested in being more actively involved with BBWN. I hope you'll help me bring my fantasy into reality.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
February/March is:

Older Women in Our Lives

Who are the women who came before us? Do you have important women in your life who are older than you? Do you have queer role models? Tell the stories of the older women who have affected your life.

Deadline: January 16, 2003

Future Issues in 2003

April/May

Why Bi?

June/July

Commitment

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

***If you do not want your name
published, please tell us.***

All articles and art appearing in
this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

BRC Honors Cathy Renna at Annual House Party


The Bisexual Resource Center will be presenting its Community Achievement Award to Cathy Renna, News Media Director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) at its annual House Party on the afternoon of Sunday, December 8.

A veteran media activist of over ten years, Cathy Renna has extensive experience in both media relations and community organizing. She has presented GLAAD's highly acclaimed media trainings in locations ranging from Alaska to New York, helping hundreds of individuals and organizations across the country to hone their skills in working with the media and in public relations.

During her tenure with GLAAD, Renna has also been at the center of many watershed moments in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community's history. At the time of the historic coming out of the title character on ABC's "Ellen," she coordinated GLAAD's "Come Out with Ellen" event in Birmingham, Alabama, drawing thousands to the southern city for a special screening in the only city whose local affiliate had refused to air the show. She regularly appears in such media as MSNBC, USA Today, CNN, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and the

Associated Press, as well as regional and local mainstream and gay media outlets.

Ellyn Ruthstrom, President of the Board of the BRC, said, "We're excited about the opportunity for the bisexual community to recognize Cathy Renna for her years of tireless activism for the bisexual, transgender, lesbian, and gay communities. She understands the many contributions bisexuals have made to lesbian and gay communities and to other progressive causes. Cathy understands the ways that homophobia and biphobia affect bisexual people, in the world at large and within GLBT communities, and she has never forgotten that sexual orientation is not a "gay/straight" issue, but something that falls on a spectrum. We look forward to showing her our appreciation at our annual House Party."

The BRC's House Party will be held on Sunday, December 8th, from 2-5 p.m. at a private residence in Boston's South End. In addition to the presentation to Cathy Renna, the event will be an opportunity for bisexuals and friends and supporters of bisexuals to meet, socialize, and celebrate the BRC's accomplishments in 2002. The suggested minimum contribution is \$40. If you are interested in attending, contact the BRC via e-mail at houseparty@biresource.org. 

Brunches Make the World Go Around

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunch coming up in Jamaica Plain in January (December is so busy we won't have a brunch). Hope you can join us. For more information about the brunches or about BBWN in general call 617-623-5535 or e-mail nellythrustmor@aol.com.

Seventh International Bisexuality Conference Goes Down Under

By Wayne Bryant

Wherever bisexuals gather they tend to make new friends and share fresh perspectives on their particular sexuality. The Seventh International Bisexual Conference in beautiful Sydney, Australia was no exception. The conference was held at the University of Technology in Sydney on October 25-28. The location and date were chosen to coincide with the Gay Games being held in Sydney the following weekend. Organizers of the Games not only helped to publicize the bi conference, but also invited conference participants to march in their opening ceremony.



Photo by Wayne Bryant

Panelists at the Bisexuals and Aging workshop at the International Bisexual Conference in Sydney, Australia.

The most immediately noticeable thing about this conference was its small size. There were fewer than a hundred attendees, as compared with the Boston conference in 1998, which attracted over

Seventh continues on page 10

Princesses of Porn Want YOU

PussyWhipped Productions is in search of performers (butch, femme, or other) to MC Queer Grrl Smut Extravaganzas, burlesque cabarets, and The Princesses Of Porn with The Dukes of Dykedom's shows and safer-sex events. The ideal candidate will have a great stage persona and rapport with the audience, MC experience, and be versatile and quick on their feet. Responsibilities may include: introducing performers, filling in between acts; performing comedy routines and skits; presenting scripted material; warming up the crowd, etc. Payment varies by venue. Ability and willingness to travel helpful, but not required. Minimal rehearsals will be required for this position. PussyWhipped Productions is a Boston-based and lesbian-owned performance company providing quality burlesque and cabaret entertainment as well as erotic readings to the queer community. Bi, trans, and lesbians of all shapes, sizes and colors are encouraged to apply for this position. Contact us at 617-541-6913 or at pussywhippedproductions@hotmail.com.

T&M from page 1

female gender influence our workflow. To my surprise, every day he delivered.

"Do you guys want some beers?" yelled Tom's partner Mary from the back window. "Sure," we answered in unison.

I had known Tom and Mary for only a year before they invited me to rent the small apartment located off the back of their house. We had always enjoyed "hanging out" together, so living closer seemed like a natural next step. It was a comfortable relationship. Sometimes I would come home and find Mary out in the garden. I would sit with her and chat as she meticulously weeded and cut fresh flowers for the house. Other times it was Tom I would encounter. He was less focused than Mary, usually looking for a project, or in more private moments, writing poems that he hoped one day would be put to music. Then there were the times that the three of us connected. This was the best. It was usually during the weekend and over a meal. We would plan to grill fish and veggies out back. They would pick up the fish in town, and I would cruise up the street to the farmer's market to purchase what looked good, and then some.

Mary came out with two beers in one hand, and a beer and cigarette in the other. She handed us each a beer, then sat on Tom's lap. "This looks good," she said. "I'd much rather cook over an open fire than on one of those bullshit, K-mart grills," she declared. Tom and I looked at each other, then busted out laughing. "You guys have been working too long in the sun," she responded. "Yes, we have," said Tom as he wrapped his arms around her, "and we deserve some special attention because of it." Tom winked at me and I felt the heat rise in all of us. I imagined what it might feel like to have your lover sit on your lap when you have a dick. I wondered if this made Tom hard. I looked over to Mary, and saw a gleam in her eye. "Special attention?" she

asked. "Well, yea," started Tom, "after all, we..." His word were transformed into a gasp as Mary pushed herself back into him and began to grind herself deeply into his lap. I felt my heart skip a beat.

"Is this what you mean by special attention?" Mary asked. Tom was smiling with eyes closed and mouth half open. It appeared he was unable to speak. He released his arms from around Mary and dropped his hands onto her hips which were moving up and back in a steady rhythm. "Yes," I responded, fearing that Tom's silence might cause Mary to rethink her actions. Mary blew a kiss in my direction, and continued to rock back and forth on Tom's lap. I smiled and gave a reassuring nod.

Wow. Was what I thought going to happen, really going to happen? I took a long drink of beer, lit the bowl Tom had been smoking and never took my eyes off the two of them. Mary stood up only long enough to change her position to kneeling between Tom's legs. He leaned back in his chair and groaned as she unbuttoned and unzipped his jeans. Just as she took him into her mouth, I remembered to breathe. ▼



After from page 1

again; or maybe it's just the one that seemed most attainable in one of my rare blue moments.

But tonight as I write, I'm feeling a little edgy and willing to take more of a risk and want you to know that holding hands isn't what I think about when I fantasize about us meeting. While it's definitely good enough for the fantasy that it is, that's not what gets me so hot that sexual energy shoots right through me making my toes curl when I come, head flung back and a moan between my teeth. There is a lot of creative space between a hug and a kiss and the place where I don't have clear images to take me further...

.....

I see you standing by your car in the parking lot where we've decided to meet. My pulse is racing as I walk up and say hi there, with a grin. You say hi back and smile, and when I get close enough we hug. You give me a kiss—the one I've been eager for—soft. Sweet. Very slow. When we break I feel this low “mmmmmm” of pleasure purring out from the back of my throat.

Or maybe...

You see me standing by my car in the parking lot, and you wave to get my attention. I smile and when you get close we hug for what seems like a long time. We pull slightly apart, look into each other's eyes and both see a “yes, go ahead.” Our kiss is intense—all hard and fast, open-mouthed, tongues. It's high voltage, like the electricity that slides up and arcs between the points of a Jacob's ladder. You press into me until my back touches the car, and then all I am aware of is our kiss/your body full against mine/how good it feels.

And sometimes it's me leaning you back into the car, because I like that image, too.


Hands. Hands are definitely in there somewhere with my fantasies about you. An ex-lover who was a trance channel once told me that my spirit originated on a planet where touch was as important to the beings there for communication as hearing or speech is for us. And while I never knew whether or not to believe his messages, somehow this rang true.

So I think about my hands touching you with purpose, almost tasting how you feel with my fingers. Running them through your hair, around your ears, across your shoulders, down your back. I usually get to the here-be-dragons unknown of my fantasy map when I start to move my hand into your shirt ... or below.

.....

We meet at a restaurant of your choice. You've gotten there before me and stand when I find the table. We hug, and briefly kiss. We sit down and share a few how-are-you-doings and some can-you-believe-we're-really-here's, and then I'm finally able to look you full in the eyes. You reach to take my hand, but instead I pull yours to my lips, kissing your palm before resting it against my cheek for a moment. Before anyone can take our orders, I say come on. Let's get out of here. I couldn't eat a bite anyway.

.....

What happens next? 

Obsession Repressed

Anonymous

I search for her in the obscure byways
Never under the street light
Never in the classroom
She eludes me by day
Only to obsess my dreams with her image

Mystic mist slinking smokily—she stalks me
Aware—I cannot resist
Plunging deeply her knife into my breast
Her breast so near-heaving, heaving before my eyes
Where can I flee

She follows me night and day
Taunts me with erotic play that she refuses to deliver

Invitingly she calls—awaits me
When will I go to her—when will I partake her sweets
Of ecstasy

Queer Jocks Gather in Cambridge in 2003

The first National Gay & Lesbian Athletic Conference will be held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 28-30, 2003. The conference is being organized by the Gay & Lesbian Athletics Foundation (GLAF) and will be the first conference of its kind which focuses on the acceptance and visibility of bisexual, trans, lesbian, and gay athletes in the professional, amateur and recreational athletic communities. The conference will include keynote speakers, panel discussions and workshops sponsored by the following partners: National Collegiate Athletics Association, Women's Sports Foundation, Federation of Gay Games, Outsports.com, Sexual Minorities in Athletics, Gay Lesbian Straight Educators Network, Gay & Lesbian Advocates Against Defamation, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Center for Lesbian & Gay Studies, AIDS Action Committee, and Gay & Lesbian Medical Association. For information, contact: Gay & Lesbian Athletics Foundation, P.O. Box 425034, Cambridge, MA 02142; 617-369-7774; info@gayconference.org; registration@gayconference.org; www.gayconference.org. While you're at it, tell them that you want them to add Bi and Trans to their organization title!

Queer Theater Festival in Philadelphia

A one-week queer theater festival will be held in June 2003 in Philadelphia and organizers are seeking submissions of plays, musicals, one-acts, revues, cabaret performances, solo pieces, and theatre for young audiences that mirror, affirm, and celebrate the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender experience. We are looking for a mixture of ready pieces, scripts to be produced by the festival, and works-in-progress for staged readings. The preliminary deadline for submissions is November 30, although the festival will accept submissions through March, contingent on available funding. Contact: Matthew Cloran, Artistic Director, Bill Esher, Managing Director; The Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival; P.O. Box 1164; Philadelphia, PA 19105. 215-627-6483 or GLTFpa@aol.com. And make sure you let them know their festival title needs to be inclusive of all the experiences they are soliciting for!

Fantasy in Real Life

When I heard about this issue's topic, I tried to notice when and why I fantasize. If I'm focused and centered on something, fantasies don't show too often. When I'm insecure or wanting to impress, fantasies flow. I guess that's a little more frequently than I'd like to admit. Now, since I'm venturing towards a new artistically full lifestyle, I find myself in situations where my lack of experience, skill, and talent are so glaring and ungainly that I fantasize frequently. It's usually about some famous gallery owner finding me, wanting to pay for all my expenses, or just can't get enough of my work. Or, I fantasize about being by the sea, with no worries about finances, just generating tons of work - and with ideas and motivation and critical acclaim flourishing.

My pipe dream fantasies occur most often when I want to impress someone — could be a hot attractive store clerk, or a teacher, a friend, a colleague. The fantasy is that they find out or see the fabulous event that I am involved with. Either I heroically beat someone up in defense of someone else (ok maybe this is more of a butch thing) or I save the day with my amazing intellect where no one else can solve a problem. Or I create an original edgy piece of artistic wonder, and Thelma's knocking at my door. Or I write a novel that's flawlessly written, deep, moving, and I get a call from Oprah to be on her show. Or I sing and perform and standing ovations follow and reviewers rave (for all to read). The thing is, now I keep it small. No need for the Nobel, Pulitzer, or curing hunger or world peace — that was for my younger years.

Lately, I've been on Grand Jury duty. Every Thursday (for 3 months) I have heard a host of horrific and desperate things: a child being beaten to death, a gang kicking a 13-year-old into a coma, a woman being beaten to where she'll never hear or see again, an elderly woman losing every penny she owns to a scam, a 7-year-old child telling 12 strangers about how her father molested her and so on. I actually fantasize here, too. These are different though—they're not about me, they're about somehow managing to be in the right place in the right time, with superhuman powers and I am able to stop the horror before it occurs. Some victim will somehow know hope in this moment.

By Steph Miserlis



The victim doesn't know how, but they survive, intact, whole. The aggressors don't know what hit them, they just somehow understand they have another chance. These kinds of fantasies also occur when I'm feeling most despondent and worried about the state of affairs. Somehow, I magically become incredibly versed in everything there is to know about politics, history, law, and diplomacy, and manage to create some semblance of peace and human rights, starting with our own nation. It's all fixed. And here again, no one knows how.

Well, it seems as if the fodder for my fantasies is endless. They come from books, little daily interactions, stories, news, people. They are interspersed throughout my week. They unfold with great detail. And they come in different forms, at different times. And during different long pockets of time I don't fantasize about anything. Other times, I'm fantasizing every other day about something. Sexual fantasies are another issue altogether. This material could come from a glimpse, an expression, a touch, a stride, a man, a woman, a TV ad, for heaven's sake. I'd need a book for this separate area. But all in all, after thinking about this, I guess the only thing consistent about all my fantasies is that they take up a lot of time. ▼

Arabian Nights in Space, Well-Running Cars, and Motorcycle Babes

by [REDACTED]

Fantasies....ah. My fantasies range from the exotic to the mundane. Arabian Nights inspired me to imagine myself as a sheik with my very own harem of peeps, surrounded by sumptuous pillows, marble baths, gold and silver trays of fresh fruits, pastries, chocolates, and secret love potions.

Although I recognize the inherent power differential in this type of fantasy, it remains arousing to imagine an entire coterie of individuals, hand-picked to satisfy one's every whim, fanning one with peacock feathers. Of course, I would hope that everyone in my harem also has their own harem to retire to, anytime they wish. Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if we were all able to join and have harems, each person having the chance to experience devotion and decadence?

Along the theme of devotional group sex, I also have fantasized about a surprise birthday party, with all my favorite people, lovers and ex-lovers, gathered to send me into the stratosphere to commemorate another year of sensuality.

Speaking of stratosphere, the thought of making love in space—weightless—infinite body-joining configurations (don't have to worry about that problem of where to put that leg or arm)—has always been a delightful idea to entertain. In fact, I hope to spend my first saved million (haha!) on a "tourist" space flight. I just wonder how fluids work in zero gravity.

But fantasies are tricky, indeed. I typically find myself flipping images through my mind while having sex, rather like a slide show or rolodex. These images tend to consist of past experiences of hot sex. I've never been one to imagine elaborate scenarios in my mind while making love to someone else, or to myself. I will muse about different ideas during other activities, drawing sexual energy from those meandering thoughts.

I spend plenty of time thinking about other people's fantasies, however, as I am currently writing a series of erotic short stories personalized for my friends. This is an immensely enjoyable, yet peculiar endeavor, as it requires walking a tightrope between prurient interest and endearing affection. Of course, who says you can't have both for your friends! However, I am an immensely ethical person; therefore, if

the fantasy does not involve me, I think of myself as just the purveyor of a well-intentioned gift for my friends, who deserve everything they want, in holographic technicolor, if possible!

Mainly I just fantasize about a world free of violence, oppression, gendered sex roles, and prejudice—one where anyone can get together with anyone without a lot of fuss! I don't necessarily need to witness the "Summer of Love" revival, although I certainly wouldn't refuse a free time travel trip (this was one of my friend's themes for her erotic story). But to live in a world where all women know how to orgasm, where it's common knowledge that the world isn't made up of just women and men, and where any configuration of people can walk down the street, matter-of-factly holding hands, simply a sign of the times, nothing more, nothing less. Hopefully I will see this in my lifetime.

Oh, and back to the mundane—I fantasize about my apartment being magically cleaned, with a nutritious dinner on the table, when I get home from work, or a big bountiful breakfast awaiting me when I get up in the morning. There's no one necessarily in the picture—just my own personal ghost taking care of me. Hmm, I'm sensing a theme here—being taken care of and having my every whim catered to seems to figure predominantly in my fantasies—I guess it comes from having a job where you are essentially listening to others and taking care of their emotional needs day in and day out (I'm a therapist).

I fantasize about my vehicles always working, being magically tuned up and gassed when necessary. I fantasize about everyone having cheap or free phone service (we've had the technology for years—it should be almost free by now). I fantasize about having a hassle-free week, where all errands magically resolve themselves without excessive intervention. Oh yeah, there is also the fantasy about a motorcycle gang catching up to me on a lone ride, and inviting me to ride with them back to their campsite for lots of leather and honey. Yum. Peace out. *(By the way, this only took me about 40 minutes to write, that means any of you out there can spend 40 minutes at least once a year to contribute to the newsletter).* ▽

NEW TIMES FOR COMING OUT GROUP!!

The Coming Out As Bisexual group has changed its regular meeting times. The Coming Out group is an informal peer support group for people of all genders who are or think they may be attracted to more than one sex. Starting in December 2002, the group will meet on the first Wednesday and third Thursday of every month. The times and place will remain the same, meeting 7-8:45 p.m. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street in Boston.

Queer Roller Skating - Oh, My!



Every Tuesday night is a GLBT-friendly night of roller skating at Chez Vous Roller Rink in Boston. Chez Vous is located at 11 Rhoades Street and is bus-accessible. Admission is \$10. MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS) and JRI Health are the sponsors and you can call 617-442-8020 x222 for more information.

Got Cool Stuff to Sell?

The Punk Rock Flea Market at the Mass College of Art Gym on Sunday, December 15 at 6 p.m. is looking for people to sell clothing, toys, anything legal. Contact benjaminsisto@hotmail.com and be part of this amazing answer to corporate holiday commercialism while supporting local artists at affordable prices!

Book Review:

Clean Start: A Novel of Paris in the 1960s
By Patricia Margaret Page, Academy Chicago Publishers



Reviewed by Deb Block-Schwenk and Fennel

Deb and Fennel, two long-time BBWN members, discussed this novel over dinner at Buddha's Delight in Brookline.

Fennel: Let's start with the cover—very interesting, wouldn't you say, Deb?

Deb: It has a pair of legs that figure significantly in the story.

F: Oh, that's true! I never thought of the connection.

D: And they are women's legs, at least they appear to be.

F: She's wearing a skirt and high heels, sitting at a table in a café. This would be one of the Paris cafés the narrator, Jane, and her husband frequent in Paris. Jane, who's Australian, is married to Tom, who's British. Tom is obsessed with women's legs; in fact, he rates them when they go out on the town.

"Sensual appeal was more important than aesthetic. Extra marks were given for such details as a tiny swollen vein running across an anklebone, or the glint of down above a knee, or the fineness of inside thigh glimpsed above a winter stocking top..." (pg. 2)

F: One night they meet this person, Sally. What was your impression of Sally in the beginning and did that change?

D: Sally isn't a biological woman. Of course, we don't know that at first. At first Sally seemed a little pretentious, I wasn't sure I liked her. Jane felt some guilt when she invited her over. She did it to prove that she wasn't bothered by how Tom tried to pick up women. The fact that Sally was trans contributed to her friendship with Jane.

F: If Sally had been a biological woman it would have been a threat—don't you think?

D: Yeah, and she wouldn't have been as interesting. Sally's situation was a novelty to Tom and Jane.

F: She spiced up their lives because they were getting a little bored and they rarely

had friends over, and then she moved in and overstayed her welcome. And somehow aside from the trans issues Jane was very codependent with her.

D: Oh, definitely. It seemed like Jane's husband was having some affairs....she needed something that Sally gave her.

"I think you and I get along very well, don't you?" she asked at one stage.

I agreed, of course.

"Maybe it's because we're both only children...Perhaps we're looking for a sister," she gave me a sly sideways glance, "or a brother." (pg. 136)

F: Sally used her beauty, and it made the jealousy issues interesting since she was trans.

D: Yes, she flirted with Tom, and hinted that all men really had some homosexual impulses. Here's a place to mention that Sally was bi; she'd had some relationships with women though she preferred men. Sally's standards about her lifestyle—the kinds of clothes she liked to wear, the kind of food she liked to eat—were very different from Tom and Jane's, so she made Jane feel inadequate in that regard. But ultimately, Sally did what she had to in order to survive. I liked the fact that not all the issues in the book are tied up neatly.

F: Like the mysterious man that pursues Sally. We never found out how he got their address, or exactly what his relationship with Sally was.

D: The details in the book were also very well done. I liked the descriptions of them sitting in the cafes, and describing the people she saw and what they would eat—you can tell the author had been there.

F: Yes, that was well done. I didn't like the book at the beginning and then I got sucked in.

D: Me, too. Once they find out about Sally's transgenderism the story became much more interesting.

F: I think their experience with Sally made them examine their relationship to possessions.

D: They held a bohemian lifestyle as an ideal, like "aren't we cool taking in a trans woman? Aren't we so open-minded?"

F: The reality is often less glamorous.

D: And in trying to help Sally, Jane and Tom learned that. Even though Sally was not a sympathetic character in a lot of ways, some of the issues she had to deal with were real. Sally couldn't get a women's passport until she'd had a sex change operation, so she was trying to get

money for the operation but in the meantime had to work without her papers if she wanted to live as a woman. That limited her options; this sort of difficulty and the danger of outright discrimination are still commonplace today. And Sally experiences a certain amount of violence as a trans person, and expects to experience more—that's still an issue that trans people deal with today.

F: Jane definitely felt sorry for Sally, almost protective of her.

"I'm always wanting to be something else. A woman's what I want to be. Not a man. Sometimes I'm sitting in front of some ghastly looking duck in a train or something and I just think to myself, Listen, lady, it doesn't matter if you stink, doesn't matter if your teeth have all fallen out. You've got everything, and I've got nothing. Because you're real." (pg. 57)

So even when Jane is irritated with Sally, Jane still thinks, "at least I'm a real woman, at least I'm a whole person."

D: What should we say about the ending?

F: Just that all the characters make "A Clean Start." ▼

Visit BBWN online at:
biresource.org/bbwn

Letter to the Editor

Dear Ellyn,

I'm writing to thank you for your timely editorial on June Jordan's passing and the across-the-board silence regarding her bisexuality in any of the memorials written.

I collected those that I saw and was planning to write letters to the various editors pointing this out, but never sat myself down to do it. Not one mention in the *LA Times*, *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, or *New York Times* to name a few! It made me feel so crazy and outraged.

We all know that if she were a self-identified lesbian this would of course be included. Your words were a welcome reality check. I appreciate it, and the BBWN newsletter.

Lani Ka'ahumanu

Poetry

Notions

By Nomi R. Siegelman

I say

Don't say "the problem with this piece is..."

Just read the piece

Perform the piece

I am the piece

Of work

Who stands here

Despite all odds

Staring into your face

And telling you not

to preface.

You say

I give them all a bad name

You say I give the 'good bisexuals' a bad name

And you mean the monogamous ones.

I say

I don't give anyone a name

But myself

And it's:

Nomi.

Despite all you've heard

That's all you can count on

Don't come here expecting

Predict

Ability

I am what I'll be

And I Won't

spoil the story

So come if you want to

But Don't

come prepared.

Unmarried To Each Other

Are you living with your sweetie? Thinking about moving in together? Choose not to marry, can't marry, or want to live together before marriage? *Unmarried to Each Other* is a new book (Marlowe & Company, November 2002) by Boston authors Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller. Founders of the Alternatives to Marriage Project, Solot and Miller interviewed 100 people in unmarried relationships for the book, including those in different-sex and same-sex relationships. The result is a 282-page guide that covers everything from making the decision to move in together to domestic partner health benefits to legal and financial issues to surviving pressure and discrimination. Stay tuned for a review in a future issue of *BiWomen*, and read more now at www.unmarriedtoeachother.com

Symposium on Trans Identities In Academia

On Saturday, February 1, a one-day symposium will be held at Brown University to discuss how trans issues and discourse can bring complexity to the curriculum taught in colleges and universities. The day will focus on feminist studies, ethnic studies, and queer studies and analyze how curriculum can include and/or discuss race studies, trans theory, and gender identities/expressions. We are looking for transsexual and transgender-identified graduate and undergraduate students, particularly people of color, people with disabilities, people of lower incomes, and immigrants/first generation people to present their work in these fields of study. Presentations can be based on what students are working on, how they are trying to implement changes in their departments, and if folks have incorporated their own trans identities into their actual scholarship. If you are interested in attending, presenting, have suggestions of presenters, and/or wish to help with the organizing of the conference, contact Sel Wahng sqw2864@nyu.edu or Cole Krawitz jkrawitz@smith.edu.

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nine hundred. Factors limiting the conference size included the high cost of getting to Australia from other places, the fact that air travel is still down, and the U.S.-lead global recession. The smaller size gave the conference a more intimate feel, with attendees really having an opportunity to get to know each other rather than barely having a chance to say, "hi." It was also good to catch up with old Boston friends Jeanne Kropper (former BiWomen editor) and Lucy Friedland (BiCEP founder), both now living in Sydney.

Conference highlights included "Bi Youth Today," a presentation by former Boston resident Skott Freedman; Clare Bear and Heather Came's presentation of "Stories of Bisexual Activism in New Zealand;" Glenn Vassallo's corresponding talk on activism in Australia, and my own "Reel Bisexuals" video presentation. On the academic front, there was some valuable new research from Professor Anthony Jorm on "Sexual Orientation and Mental Health," and from Sara Lubowitz and Dr. Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli on "Women in Relationships with Bisexual Men."

Other workshops like "Growing Your Bisexual Group," "Bisexuals and Aging," and "Bisexual Students, Multisexual Families" also generated a lot of discussion.

Social gatherings were, of course, not



Bi people from around the world gathered in Sydney for the Seventh International Bisexual Conference.

neglected. On the first evening there was a reception at the conference site, followed by a group dinner at a Nepalese restaurant. The next night featured a big party at a bar in King's Cross, with over 200 bisexual and bi-friendly people in attendance and live music by Skott Freedman. On the closing night of the conference there was a Chinese feast at a local restaurant. Since many bi people were still in town for the Gay Games, people continued to meet in the week following the conference for dinner, drinks, sightseeing, and even a "gallery crawl."

Conference organizers Mel Venn, Wayne Roberts, Glenn Vassallo, Munro Saunders, and others did a great job of keeping alive the tradition of excellent international bi conferences. The first was held in Amsterdam and was followed by London, New York, Berlin, Boston, Manchester, and now Sydney. The conference location for 2004 has not yet been determined, though suggested candidates include Montreal, Miami, and Minneapolis. ▽

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have your
**Bisexual
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Guide** yet?



To order, send check or money order for \$8, or get 2 for \$15 (payable to BRC), with your name and address, to:
BRC, Dept. BBWN, P.O. Box 1026,
Boston, MA 02117.

Or check out the BRC Web page at www.biresource.org to buy the Guide and other great bi products.

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

other people have to say. At Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland Street, Boston.

December 31 ♦ Tuesday

BOSTON'S FIRST NIGHT, 7 p.m. We will begin the New Year's Eve celebration with vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. From there, the group will decide what First Night festivities to partake in. Buddha's Delight is now upstairs on Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

January 6 ♦ Monday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See December 10th.

January 7 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "What Does it Mean to You to be Bisexual?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

January 8 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See December 11th.

January 11-12 ♦ Saturday & Sunday

Fetish Fair Fleamarket. New England Leather Alliance presents its 20th semiannual Fetish Fair Fleamarket in the Boston Park Plaza hotel. New vendors, new space and another fantastic Saturday night party! Saturday 11-6 p.m., Sunday 11-3 p.m., \$10 admission includes dozens of educational workshops and classes. See www.nla-newengland.org for more info.

January 12 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Bowling Brunch, noon. Meet at Lanes and Games on Rt. 2 in Cambridge.

We'll bowl a few strings and then go find a place to have a late lunch.

Be ready for some big laughs. Contact Ellyn if you are interested in going, 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.

January 14 ♦ Tuesday

Queer Married Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See December 10th.

January 16 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See December 4th.

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Older Women in Our Lives." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.



January 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Why argue with success? Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

January 21 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is: "Casual Relationships: Horrible or Helpful?" See December 3rd.

January 22 ♦ Wednesday

Evening Meal with Biversity, 6:30 p.m. After a hard day of work, wouldn't it be nice to get together and celebrate the end of hump day with some friendly people over a nice meal? Meet at Pho Republic, 1415 Washington Street in the South End. Take the new Silver Line to the Union Park stop. (You can catch the Silver Line at Downtown Crossing, among other places.)

January 26 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Sarah's in Jamaica Plain, 11:00 a.m. Bring a potluck dish to share and get ready to enjoy some relaxing conversation with other wonderful bi women. Contact Sarah to let her know you'll be coming and to get directions. 617-983-0180 or s.rowley@neu.edu.

January 28 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen mailing, 7 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Socialize during and after, when we'll head to Central Square for a cuppa.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

NEW DAY: Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

*Women's Club
Nights*

Thursdays: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain.

**BiWomen
wants you!!!**



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The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

Every Thursday:

Queer Jewish Women Under 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR

December 1 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. The Lindwood Grill has brought back Sunday brunch and expanded their brunch menu! It's located at 69 Kilmarnock Street in Boston's Fenway area (very close to Thornton's). Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

December 3 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Dating Men: How do your lesbian friends react? Your family?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

December 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

December 8 ♦ Sunday

Bisexual Resource Center Third Annual House Party, 2-5 p.m. at the home of Roland and Carol Glenn, 76 West Rutland Square in Boston. All are invited. Hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. \$40 suggested contribution, call 617-424-9595 for details.

December 9 ♦ Monday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. Open to all self-identified women. Contact Rosa at

rcarson@wso.williams.edu with questions.

December 10 ♦ Tuesday

Queer Married Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Contact Denise at dpp1029@aol.com for information. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

December 11 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is on the fourth floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

December 17 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "I'll Be Bi For The Holidays." See December 3rd.

December 19 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. See December 4th.

December 21 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

December 23 ♦ Monday

Mixed Gender Poly Support Group, 6:30-8:45 p.m. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what

CALENDAR continues on page 11

HELP SUPPORT BBWN WITH YOUR USED BOOKS, CDS, VHS TAPES, AND DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias has offered to help BBWN with fundraising. She will accept used books, etc. and list them for sale on various online channels. For any book that sells within three months of being listed, 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. (The remaining 60% goes for online listing fees, shipping supplies, and for the actual work of listing, managing, packaging and shipping the books.)

Anything that doesn't sell in three months she will probably throw out or give away to make room for new inventory. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!